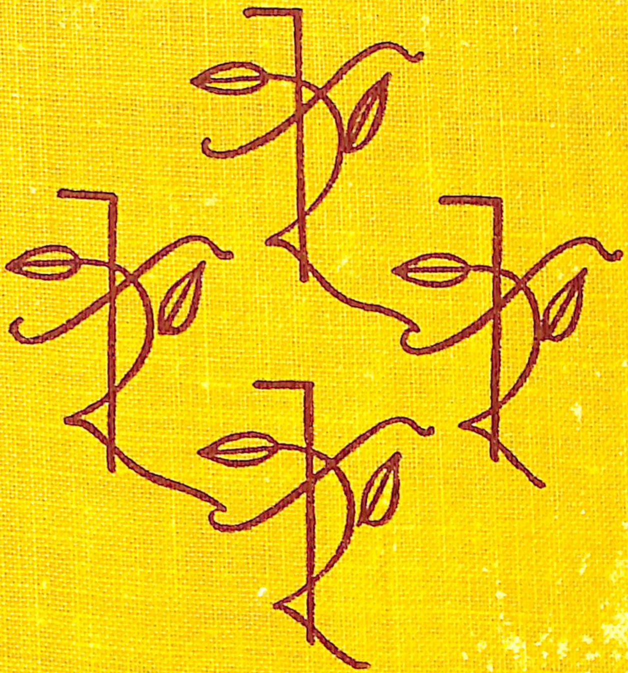
The Individual and the Group

by

B. K. Mallik

an Indian study in Conflict

George Allen and Unwin



A social and historical study of Hindu-Mohammedan and Anglo-Indian relations, the novelty of which lies in an analysis showing the intimate interconnection between the two problems. The author feels convinced that a system can be suggested which will do away with the compromise necessitated in the past by the mutual incompatibility of the systems of class and caste; and he further indicates the lines on which each of the problems ought now to be dealt with.

After responsible administrative experience as a young man in one of the independent States of India, B. K. Mallik spent twelve years in Oxford engaged in philosophical studies in companionship with the best minds of the English post-war generation. He went back to India in 1923 to reassume social and administrative responsibilities. On returning to England just over a year ago, he wrote this book as a preliminary to the metaphysic of his philosophy, which he is now preparing for publication.

Although he is in close intellectual sympathy with leaders of modern Indian life and thought, such as Professor Radhakrishnan and Jawaharlal Nehru, his own position is quite distinct from that of any of them.

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B. K. MALLIK, M.A., D.Sc.

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TO

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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Introductory

A group of Bengalis anxious to study the Hindu-Mohammedan problem met and discussed it in the sultry heat in July of 1936. Their meetings took place in the picturesque surroundings of suburban Calcutta under the auspices of a club rather politically minded; and the men who anxiously took part in them were noted specialists with at least some authority to represent their views. All that this vigorous and earnest group seemed to care about was an analysis of the various interpretations of this problem, so confusedly lying about. Their sole object was to reduce them all if possible to a coherent position and then look for a solution conscientiously. And the point of this book is simply to try and give at least a summary of the discussion as it moved on from week to week in spite of the weather; and then, leaving the group behind, to work out some speculations of my own arising out of the discussion. These speculations are evolved to a point at which it becomes clear that they imply the need for a new metaphysic. An account of this metaphysic will be given in a later book.

I tender my warmest thanks to all the friends

who so generously helped me with this book, especially to J. W. Gynes, Alan Collingridge, Edward O'Brien, and to Professor Sir S. Radhakrishnan, to whose book, *The Hindu Way of Life*, any reader who wishes for a fuller exposition of Hinduism should refer.

B. K. M.

NOTE

The reference at the bottom of page 159, of the old lady going down the steps, is to a story known only to the late Professor F. C. S. Schiller and to the author. Professor Schiller is dead, and the author has forgotten the story, but the reference has been retained, in spite of all protests from those who have read the book in proof, because the author insists that the story was so perfectly apposite to his argument.

Chapter I

The discussion started with a thesis by the sociologist of the group; and he happened to hold with confidence that, however we might deplore the fact that the Hindu and the Mohammedan were directly under the shadow of a sinister problem, we need not have misgivings about the genuineness of the relationship between them. There could be no question but that this relationship was true and real, and no mere makeshift or stratagem which the shifting scenes of Indian history quietly deposited as a blot on our conscience. And the reason why he held such an extremely agreeable view was that his erudition discovered two distinct truths which directly bore on the Hindo-Mohammedan problem:

1. That in the heart of all conflict there must be the nucleus of some common agreement.

2. That the actual conflict between the Hindu and the Mohammedan did possess such a nucleus.

Somehow the sociologist found it necessary to believe that a conflict in the nature of things could not arise unless there was already some agreement between the conflicting parties. Unless, for instance, the Hindu and the Mohammedan belonged in the

last analysis either to a common stock, whatever that might mean, or cherished a common faith, or a culture, or a social system, they could not possibly come into clash. He seemed to be positive that in spite of their acute disagreements there was nothing wrong with the foundation of their life. This position, however strange, made a great impression on the group; the only question being whether its distinctly speculative point about the nature of conflict would stand, and that it was not possible for a political group so easily to decide. On the contrary, the sense of the group was that it might or might not be altogether true precisely because it stood or fell with a metaphysic. At least one member of the group compared it with the curate's egg, half good and half bad. In any case, it was supposed that the sociologists would find it extremely difficult to prove that the agreement coincided or existed side by side with the disagreement, nor would it be possible for him to deduce the prospective solution of the conflict from the agreement. Obviously this criticism was not very far out, as it seemed to be practically a repetition of the usual comment on the Hegelian view of synthesis. Personally, I felt that it was too late in the day to dress up the German assertions literally; and one might even be unwise and add that if Hegel is practically dead, his successor in the economic region ought to have been buried before he was born. So that, therefore, the strength of our sociologist's position would be better tested if we

confined our analysis more to his historical discovery than to his strictly logical claim. Still it need not be held that agreement and disagreement do not stand in relationship at all: on the contrary, they distinctly imply one another. Only we do not know as yet what this word implication really means. The point that the group was interested in making was that it would be unwise to expect too much from the common tradition, or fundamental agreements, especially where the conflict happened to be very acute.

There seemed however to be absolute agreement in the group that the historical claim of the sociologist had quite a different story to tell. As a matter of fact, it absorbed the attention of the group, even though most of the members were sceptically disposed. The rather bold thesis—that the Indian Mohammedan social structure, after the era of the raids and conquests had ended, came to be patterned more or less on the Hindu plan—was extremely valuable. It almost excited the group, and to some at any rate it sounded like a revelation that the Mohammedan, as he settled down, should have adopted the Hindu doctrine of services and functions instead of professing and practising his own Asiatic faith. There was something uncannily refreshing in the assertion that he adopted the village economy, the joint family, and the caste system of the Hindu scheme. It was the sociologist's anxious care to point out how the spirit and letter of the Hindu joint

family definitely modified the Mohammedan law in India so far as the question of inheritance was concerned. He was equally positive in claiming that there was no trace of any such feature in at least the original Koranic version. And so far as the caste hierarchy was concerned, there were the numerous guilds and associations in most of the trading and industrial classes among the Mohammedans who consider dining together or inter-marriage between them as tabu. Moreover it was common knowledge how there were strong Mohammedan groups who refused either to dine with or inter-marry into families who had ever had anything to do with "beef." Surely all this was evidence that there was at least some agreement between the two communities so far as their economic or social interests were concerned. The claim of the sociologist on the whole was that some kind of fusion must have taken place between the Hindu and the Mohammedan in spite of their obvious and deep disagreements; and it would never do for any historian to forget that for long centuries there has been no serious clash between them to endanger or imperil their joint life in the village community. The fact is that for all practical purposes they lived together as one people exactly as, for instance, the Protestant and the Catholic did in European society, in spite of bitter hostilities between them. And the sociologist was emphatic in maintaining that the Mohammedan in India did not preserve his too acutely dogmatic

attitude in his religious faith as the result of his close and constant life with the Hindus. What happened between him and the Hindu was exactly what had happened before between the Hindu and the Indian Christians, whether in the early Christian era or later in the British period. Inside the body politic of the Hindus—which made no room for dogma or creed, but on the contrary made provision for any faith or belief if it happened to be cherished or practised by a community—the Mohammedans really and truly gradually formed a caste by themselves. And it was by no means a matter of hardship or distress for a Mohammedan to have to live with the Hindus, as long centuries of common life with them must have shown him how it was not necessary to be literally strict and rigorous in all the articles of one's faith, especially if they directly question the right to existence of any other faith or culture. If we are not very far out, it was the great Omar of Mohammedan history who proclaimed that India was not the land which the Mohammedans should conquer, as the people there were gentle and tolerant enough to allow the Mohammedans to offer their prayers in their own way. As a matter of fact, there is a good deal of Mohammedan history before the Mohammedan conquest of India took place, and the strictly Mohammedan attitude to Hinduism in those days, if only we could discover it, might show that it was not in its purity that the Mohammedan faith and culture came out to India with the raids

and conquests, but as it was moulded by the virile racial element which almost necessarily gave a twist to its meaning. Perhaps the true Mohammedan never got a chance with the Hindu, as we say in the twentieth century the true Englishman never gets a chance with the Indian. Whatever differences the racial element might have made to the technique and mode of staging the Mohammedan culture and faith in India, the sociologist was firm in holding that nothing could prevent the rise and growth of a joint life between the Hindu and the Mohammedan under the aegis of the ancient village economy. To him, at any rate, it did not matter very much if difficulties still arose between them, even in a manner which seemed at times to do away with their common life altogether. He was convinced that that life had come to stay and that neither diplomacy nor recrudescence of old fanaticism could do it any harm.

It was only natural that, in making this enormous claim about the fusion between the Hindu and Mohammedan, the sociologist should make no secret of his conviction that it was sheer interested motives which kept back this essentially sane view of the Hindu-Mohammedan relationship from the public gaze. He was even severe on the modern historian who has hitherto catered mostly for the political strategist and commercial exploiter. And it was a fact that he was by no means suspected by the group of either being too far out, or of putting a

wrong construction on Indian medieval history. On the contrary, a view that prevailed in the group was that the fusion as the sociologist suggested was a solid fact which no amount of ingenuity could remove. Two things were noted by the group in the course of the discussion that followed:

1. That the Hindu social system was not touched by the Mohammedan rulers. It was allowed to run on, and administer the needs of the people at large, in the way it had done for hundreds of centuries.

2. That no other major system was implanted by its side, either as a rival, or as an ideal or a model to follow.

The conclusion followed necessarily that the main bulk of the Mohammedan population who lived on land lived as members of the village economy. So far as the city population was concerned, they either all came under the direct influence of the old and ancient guilds, or formed part of the military and general administrative system.

Nowhere in Indian history would one come across an experiment to work out a whole social system which was both different from and hostile to the Hindu economy.

The most that could be said about the anti-Hindu or pro-Moslem institutions and movements, was that they took the form of sporadic attempts at converting the Hindus to the Mohammedan faith, and history has put on record how such cases were preceded or

succeeded by equally vigorous movements to undermine the Mohammedan faith. If we have to preserve the memory of Emperor Aurungzebe as the most ruthless iconoclast the Mohammedan rule in India produced for the destruction of the Hindu faith, we must equally keep in mind that Emperor Akbar's attempt meant practically an abolition of the Mohammedan faith. History is a generous medium for adjustments of all kinds, and it ought not to be difficult to show how the Mohammedan attempts to break away from the Hindu fold by sporadic onslaughts on the Hindu faith were always matched by some provocative conditions on the Hindu side which meant to jeopardize legitimate Mohammedan interests.

But there was at least one strong opinion in the group which seriously questioned the stability or permanence of the joint life in the village community. The point of this opinion was that in the make-up of the Mohammedan who came over to India there was an element which made the stability of the fusion almost incalculable. The fact is that they came from the corridor of Central Asia, and as the latest converts to the Moslem faith on whom civilization rested like a thin veneer. They were by no means races or peoples of a long-standing civilized tradition or settled habits which made for civilized life. And if the Hindu community has failed so far to stabilize its relationship with them in the manner it did with practically all the races and cultures that

preceded them, the failure may well be traced to this uncertain racial element. The issue perhaps was not so much between the Hindu culture and the Mohammedan faith as between the civilized order of existence and some fundamental claim to primitive freedom. Here is a type of virile humanity which refuses to submit long to any rational economy; so that the problem frankly may not be Mohammedan so much as primitive.

The view in question, whatever its truth or worth, seemed to be perfectly original and novel, and what made it specially attractive, at least to the philosophic minds of the group, was that it had a direct bearing on what is known as the British phase of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem. It has always been difficult for serious minds in India to make out why and how the Indian Mohammedan should have allied himself with the British government in the name of Islam to oppose the modern national movement in India. There was evidently nothing Hindu or religious in that movement; and, as everybody knows, it was the only healthy and direct result of the contact between England and India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is a fact that Indian nationalism would not coincide with the Hindu conception or practice of social economy, any more than that it would offend either the Hindu or the Mohammedan religious susceptibilities. On the contrary, very great minds both among the Hindus and the Mohammedans

have associated themselves with it; and, what is specially significant for the Indian Mohammedan, is that the seat of the Mohammedan culture and faith, the very cream of the Mohammedan community, and finally the most advanced of the Mohammedan states, adopted the same creed as that out of which Indian nationalism was made. What then was it that led the Indian Mohammedan to oppose not only the Indian Nationalist, but also his co-religionists the Turk, the Egyptian and the Persian? Could it possibly be Islam? Yet, to uphold or safeguard Islam, the natural thing for the Mohammedan could not be to uphold and support the policy of the British Cabinet, which was meant to crush the nationalist movement of India. How could one derive such a procedure from the injunctions of the Koran?

The British Cabinet, even in its most liberal mood, could hardly quite shake off the Gladstonian or even Lloyd Georgian tradition on the Mohammedan issue, though the stress of circumstances might have made them more reticent and diplomatic than their predecessors. How could the policy of a strongly Christian Cabinet inspired by imperial necessity be followed in the interest of Islam when the Saviour of Mohammedan culture and faith in the twentieth century, Kemal Pasha, had deliberately chosen to be nationalistic in his policy? Could the Turkish policy which established nationalism in Turkey be less conducive to Islam than the British policy which

sought to crush it in India? Could by any chance any Mohammedan choose between Kemal Pasha and the Prime Minister of England as a defender or upholder of Islamic culture and faith? Why then did the Indian Mohammedans throw over Kemal Pasha and adopt the policy of the British Cabinet with the plea that there was no other way to safeguard the interests of Islam? How again could they affect to believe that they had a better right or greater authority to decide what is and what is not good for Islam? Do not they profess the faith and culture of the Mohammedans by the right of a convert alone or of a domicile? Is it likely that a convert or a domicile could claim the right of authority to speak on behalf of the original faith? Is it conceivable that Indian Mohammedans would supersede the cream of the Mohammedan community in the seat and centre of their culture and faith in the matter of truly representing the Mohammedan faith? And again, if it be a fact that the Mohammedan culture and faith died the moment the advanced Mohammedan states turned nationalistic, would it not be a miracle if the Indian Mohammedan did actually resurrect it by siding with the British Cabinet?

Still one may conceive of a situation where even the converts to a faith may develop some original authority or right to decide about the essentials of that faith. That situation however can only arise if the converts succeed in suggesting some fresh interpretation or a fresh message of hope by sheer genius

or grace for the faithful in the community. But can the Indian Mohammedan by any stretch of imagination be supposed to have offered any such interpretation? Had they even set an example for the high virtues of Islam—simplicity, purity, and brotherhood? As far as it is known, in the place of simplicity they have only a peculiar narrowness of vision, while in place of brotherhood they have developed a strong class consciousness. These are not exactly Moslem virtues, while it would be difficult to find purity in India even if you traversed the whole peninsula. How then could anybody orient a claim for them as if they were the only surviving authority or representative of the Moslem faith and culture? How could a mere increase in number and a better organized existence, which are all that could be discovered as the new assets of the Mohammedans in the twentieth century, put them even on a par with the Turks and the Persians? And who does not know that these assets are the gift of British diplomacy and may turn into liabilities any day, for nothing is more treacherous and uncertain than the diplomatic patronage of any race or nation, European or Asiatic.

Chapter II

The hypothesis, therefore, that it was the need of safeguarding the essential interests of Islam that precipitated the most unexpected Mohammedan opposition to the Indian movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, will not work. It is inconceivable that any sane person should call the Indian Mohammedan movement against Indian nationalism, in any sense of the term, religious. It would be extremely difficult to make out that its one object has been to preserve Islam from decay and corruption. On the other hand, it ought to be easy to see how the true ideal of Islam was diametrically opposed to the policy that the British Cabinet, for reasons of its own, had to choose with regard to Indian nationalism. It is inconceivable that one could uphold that Mohammedan ideal, and be in league with the British Cabinet of the twentieth century. For if it be a fact that Islam chose to be even fanatic, and used violence and force for the one object of bringing together the whole of the human races in one family, could the true and faithful among the Mohammedans ally themselves with the British policy, which is bound to end in keeping the

races and peoples of India apart? Can anybody suggest for a moment that the British rule and British policy in India had for its sole object the Moslem ideal of brotherhood and equality? Is it possible to believe that from its origin to the present day it has been nothing but one stupendous attempt at knitting together the Indian races and peoples on the basis of Mohammedan brotherhood? How then could the Indian Mohammedans come to believe that the British Cabinet was the sole representative on earth in the twentieth century of the ideal of Islam?

Yet again, what has been the true significance of the order that the British Empire succeeded in establishing over so large a portion of the world's surface in terms of what it chose to call justice and freedom? Could we discover in that order, which is claimed to be an embodiment of justice and freedom, a clue to the Moslem illusion? There have been many occasions in the past when British statesmen, historians, and jurists made the definite claim that the British Empire stood as an embodiment of justice and freedom; and that it was different both in its ideal and technique from the empires that preceded it, and from even the modern or contemporary attempts at solving the problems of the human race. So far as India is concerned, the claim rose high enough to imply that it was with the British rule that justice and freedom entered into the administration of Indian affairs. Naturally the comments on

the nature and output of the indigenous Indian civilization could not afford to be highly complimentary. Roughly it was estimated on the level of the barbaric or the semi-civilized. And if even a fraction of all that has been claimed with regard to the nature and character of both the British rule and the Indian civilization could be established, the Indian Mohammedans would have some reason in accepting the British rule as the only possible representative of Islamic brotherhood in the twentieth century. But is it possible that the claim can be established?

We need not go back to history for instances of imperial adventure to give the British Empire a chance for favourable comparison. We have enough material to hand in the twentieth century achievements of the modern empires, Holy alliances, Leagues of Nations, etc., to discover if such institutions can be rightly supposed to have brought in the era of justice and freedom. It is obvious that it is impossible to institute a comparison between, say, the great Roman Empire and the empire which has just arisen in Rome, unless we know for certain what constituted the main objective of each. If the Macedonian Empire, for instance, or the Mogul Empire, did not in point of fact choose to work out any ideal of justice and freedom, there is no reason why we should institute an invidious distinction between them and the British Empire which professes to have done nothing else. Occasions of comparison arise

only when there is a common programme for judgment; and judgment on any achievement, whether classical or modern, ought to run on the exact and precise claim of that achievement. It is bad history and worse logic to tie up every adventure of the human race in the continuous record of human experience, under the same category.

The truth may be that the British Empire started under conditions which made the repetition of a Macedonian or Roman adventure inconceivable; and if it be a fact that the imperial minds in the British Isles had to strike out a new line of adventure to satisfy their imperial instincts, there should be no surprise if we actually find them working out a programme of justice and freedom. But have we the evidence that they not only had a programme for the high ideals of justice and freedom, but worked it out to an extent sufficient for the purpose of making a valuation of their achievement? We shall take it for granted that the programme was for making the British administration a pattern of justice and freedom; that it was not for exploitation or conquest pure and simple; that it was, on the contrary, a civilizing agency to restore order and peace to the peoples and the races it happened to rule. The main point for enquiry will then lie in discovering what it meant and understood by justice and freedom, and whether it had a peculiar significance of its own or belonged to the traditional type.

As far as we know, the limit of the British ideal

and practice could not, for one thing, exceed the range of what is called democratic liberalism of the modern era. Even if the British authorities honestly and wholeheartedly intended to work out a programme for justice and freedom it was inevitable that they would have to work within the modern European possibilities of political and economical experiments, namely,

1. Parliamentary rule.
2. Industrial economy.

But the fact is that the British rule in India as it was started in the early nineteenth century was altogether different from the British rule either in the nineteenth or twentieth century British Isles, or in the feudal form which was superseded by democratic liberalism. We can no more call it a variant of the parliamentary form that prevailed in the British Isles, than a replica of the manorial feudal system which had existed before. What it was exactly we may have occasion to discuss later on; but one can easily discover at least two features in it which must have served as the sole determining factors:—

1. The interest of British trade and industry in India.

2. The necessity of restoring order in the nineteenth century in India in place of the chaos which followed the break-up of the Mogul rule, and the consequent need of an efficient administrative organization. It follows that whatever other features

it actually or incidentally possessed, they had to be in line for all practical purposes with the two prevailing ends. For instance, if the Christian missionary movement that came in with the rule wanted to act on its own, it had to act as ally of the ruler, subscribing to that ruler's ways and motives. If conversion to Christianity meant success and prosperity for the British administration with its key point in the commercial interests of England, it could easily look for encouragement from the British government. If on the other hand it made the task of their administrator difficult and onerous by going against the grain of the habits and sentiments of the people, it became at once a tabu.

One could choose instances from every sphere of life, such as education, public works, etc., to illustrate the potency of these two basic needs, namely trade and order. For the same paramount reason it became necessary for the British administration to devise a scheme of government by which the whole of the indigenous system which worked in the village community had to be deliberately set aside. In Bengal they introduced what is called "the permanent settlement," and in all other provinces, as far as possible, changes were introduced which had the same end in view, namely displacement of the indigenous system. The rule started with a new political and social policy to serve in the main an economic motive, the motive of British trade and commerce. It made no difference to British statesmen and

jurists whether what was introduced in the place of the indigenous system went dead against the accumulated experience of centuries, or whether it meant a lower and less complete type of justice and freedom than what the Indians themselves had for centuries professed and practised. A change was indispensable for British trade and commerce, and therefore it was inevitable. And as we have already suggested, it was neither a variant of democratic liberalism nor a replica of the baronial system. Whether it was a deliberate policy, too, for colonization may be left an open question, for the failure of the planters in India, in spite of the barbarous technique to displace the landed gentry, did not leave much hope of success.

But can we call this frankly commercial policy an attempt to introduce the ideals of justice and freedom into the realm of Indian society, and that for the first time in its history? Should we with any sense of proportion call by the name of civilizing mission this honest attempt to safeguard and build up British trade and commerce? Was the attempt to displace a time-honoured social structure, which had built up the Indian civilization in the course of hundreds of centuries, by a purely administrative machinery which had no roots in any social system, western or eastern, the best way to guarantee and ensure justice and freedom to any people?

It is not our point in this book to review the

British rule as a historian would; our interest is to discover the nature of the policy or principle which was central in the British administration, so that we may calculate the nature of justice and freedom that could possibly accrue from it to the people for whom it was meant. May we not conclude from the fact that it was, in the main, cast in the economic interest of the British people, that it might have failed to guarantee to the Indians anything which was not a necessity for successful trade? For what, after all, is the law which would form its guiding principle? Would it not be the law of the market? And what is that law if it is not the law which controls the process of making a profit and avoiding a loss? And how much of any other principle than that of competition enters into it? And do we not all know what type or quality of justice and freedom gets the chance when competition or monopoly rules? Will it be at all consistent to hold that the British administration of India in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries succeeded in guaranteeing to the people justice and freedom of a type of which they never had any idea, in spite of the fact that they were honestly busy building-up or safeguarding a stupendous organization for trade and exploitation? Even those who believe in miracles leave it as the special preserve of the supernatural agents. And no Indian or Englishman, unless he is frankly a politician or a missionary or a shareholder, could for a moment believe that the British government guaranteed to the Indian

justice and freedom, just when the British investment in India was producing the largest dividend. For the Indian in particular, it is extremely difficult to see how the Englishman could possibly guarantee justice and freedom to him when he so deliberately displaced his social order and in fact put him under the law of the market. He could, indeed, concede to the Englishman every conceivable claim, but he cannot absolve him from the responsibility of having established a market on the very site where for hundreds of centuries his only home on this earth had stood. If this did not mean sapping the roots of justice and freedom in the Indian economy, it is difficult to see what could. It was sheer mockery to the Indian that he should be promised greater freedom and justice than he ever had enjoyed, when as a matter of fact he was literally turned away from his home and hearth and pitilessly put at the mercy of the capitalist, or the moneylender, as you might choose to call him.

This is the real truth of the Indian situation if you choose to go down to the bottom, and it just means that no other conclusion was possible from the premises from which the British rule started. If you want trade, and a rule that will follow its mandate, you cannot have a just and wise administration and at the same time a fat dividend for the shareholders. You can build up an efficient administration, and a powerful army and navy, and you can incidentally create an atmosphere of splendour and even culture

of a kind, but you cannot build up at the same time a just rule, a well-knit social order, and an atmosphere of civilization which promises nothing but justice and freedom to the people.

Chapter III

It does not certainly follow that the British rule must have maintained its policy and technique uniformly from its crude beginning in the late eighteenth century down to the present time. On the contrary, it is inconceivable that it could have preserved itself either in the form which the East India Company gave to it, or in the more mature shape into which the Queen's proclamation turned it. The changes that necessarily began to appear in the world situation since its origin, and their repercussion in the Indian world, made a truly conservative policy unworkable. And by the time the nineteenth century was drawing to its close, it came to be subjected to influences both from the world situation and the Indian atmosphere which determined finally what shape it would have to assume sooner or later. It is not our interest here, as we have already hinted, to discuss like the historian the nature of those changes and their precise influence on British policy, but no one can eliminate even such events as the Russo-Japanese war, or the Boer war, or the evident signs of Asiatic awakening, whether in the Mongolian or the Moslem states, from the

active zone which directly influenced the Indian mind.

The British policy and technique came to be questioned steadily and systematically by the Indian leaders of thought and action, who in the meantime had been brought up in the political technique of European economics. Even long before the end of the nineteenth century, almost a century before, when the principles of the French revolution and the keen enthusiasm of the English radicals were like a strong gale blowing in Europe, men like Raja Ram Mohun Roy criticized the British constitution as neither European in its form nor Indian in its origin. What is truly remarkable is that a protest under the direct inspiration and leadership of the British mind arose early, and that it is this protest which gradually grew in volume and intensity as the situation both in India and the world at large began to change. It is common knowledge now how this protest throve on an appreciation and assimilation of European culture, real personal relationships between Indians and Englishmen, business connections between English houses and the Indian business world, and lastly the keen support of men and women from England who gave their very best to the service of India for all they were worth. No historian would miss putting on record this side of the British rule which, like a paradox, was a standing protest against it. It was felt by everybody who had any familiarity with English life how far short of it British rule fell; how

it looked almost like an anachronism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of the English people.

The force, however, that really stimulated this movement, and gradually fanned it into flame, came from the Indian social or economic existence. With the growth of the century, and greater and greater exploitation of the people and the country, it became evident how the Indian home was losing both culturally and economically. The fact is that dire poverty and extreme misery almost necessarily began to appear all over the continent, side by side with the huge organizations for exploiting the country. The people were not only sapped at their economic roots by the deliberate process of systematic exploitation; the whole of their social order, on which their domestic peace, economic security, and cultural growth depended, was seriously and rudely shaken. The village, which formed the unit of the Indian system with its efficient and compact organizations for thousands of years, began to disappear, and countless homes fell a prey to ravages as well of disease as of starvation and domestic disorder. In the course of half a century the only system that could preserve the people was gradually brought to the verge of ruin, and in its place was put an economic system which worked, for British interests in the main, with an administration ill-suited to the needs of the people and utterly ignorant of them.

It is no hyperbole to suggest that if the Indian still talks to-day of the revival, and sees dreams of the

renaissance in the near future, it is not because the British attempt did not consciously or unconsciously seek the ruin of the Indian indigenous system. In fact it was a miracle that the British rule escaped the chances of facing a revolution in the country many times over, and that miracle was possible only because the Indian system ruled out violence from its economy. No European country would have succeeded in preserving its stolid equanimity under those conditions. Could it be doubted for a moment that the national movement would find the chief source of its inspiration in the dire poverty and complete breakdown of the Indian society? Can anyone for a moment deny that its real strength is not to be judged by its confused or effete ideology, but by its root in the tragic conditions of the people at large?

Then what possible meaning can be left for the claim that the British rule stood as the sponsor of justice and freedom in Indian history? How would the historian judge the value of the instalments of parliamentary rule to India, known as reforms, in the face of the disruption of the Indian home life and the misery and agony of mind that followed? It is an open secret how these reforms never came unless crises in some form or other had appeared in the Indian or English life, due to sudden changes in the world situation. It is equally an open secret how they were hedged round by safeguards and precautions for the benefit and security of the British

interest, and it is neither here nor there to suggest that if the British statesmen were slow in granting parliamentary rule to India it was because they were not convinced that it was suited to the Indian condition. Of course they were not convinced; and nobody can argue even to-day that it is the only form of rule or administration for the Indian people.

Surely the point really at issue was not whether the parliamentary form of rule should be granted to India, and granted at the precise moment when there was unanimity in the British Cabinet. The real issue was how to guarantee justice and freedom to the Indian individuals and groups under the administration which was responsible for their welfare. If it was difficult to make up one's mind as to the efficiency of the Indians to be given the franchise, surely it was not difficult to make sure that they had a claim to justice and freedom. And even if it was still more difficult for the British statesmen and administrators to understand the ideal and technique of the indigenous Indian system, surely it was incumbent upon them to provide some other system which guaranteed justice and freedom either equally or in a much better way.

But what did actually happen? Did they provide for it, or did they not as a substitute only grant instalments of reform, and waste their time in comparing the outward structure of the India of the twentieth century, with her modern facilities or amenities and possibilities, with that of the medieval

age? Surely nobody was so stupid as to suggest that Akbar the Great or Asoka the Great had the opportunity of issuing commands to their chief officers through the medium of twentieth-century scientific appliances; nor is it claimed that life was equally safe and secure in the medieval days in the same sense as it is now. Anyone can see that we can, if we like, make life for all much more comfortable, secure and constructive than ever before with the help of the appliances which science and the corresponding organization have so liberally placed at our disposal. But is it a fact that life has been made more secure and sound? Could we swear that we do really construct better in the twentieth century than our ancestors who lived and died, say, in the fifteenth century? Does society again on the whole stand today much more stable and peaceful than ever before? Do we trust one another, sympathize with one another more than we did before? The whole face of the world has changed, and distance among other things has practically dwindled into nothing.

There are possibilities to-day that the human family may if it likes live in a common home, but what exactly are the realities that you have to face in any part of the world? What, for instance, has happened to the Indian home and society while from one end of the country to the other there is rapid transportation? How does all this help in preserving the Indian home, or the Indian culture, or the Indian nation, for which all these conveniences are

meant? The fact is that they mock like the furies the vast population of India, and it is only those who form the vanguard of the British rule who enjoy them. Should we then still hold that the British rule brought justice and freedom to the Indian people, the like of which was never known in Indian history? And what are the reforms worth if the country at large gradually lapsed into a state of primitive helplessness? Even if by an accident reforms ripen into full-fledged parliamentary rule, how would that help the situation? Would an Indian parliament produce miracles in India, when its model failed to stabilize the social order of Europe or avoid periodic warfare? Would India as a national state succeed in introducing the era of peace and prosperity in the East, when all the national states of the world find it necessary to specialize in nothing except warlike activities and building up armaments as the only normal method of preserving their freedom?

There is more than pathos, there is tragedy in the fulfilment of the British promise to the Indian people in the year of grace 1937 by granting them a new constitution. The event marked two contrasted epochs in the history of the human race:—

1. In Europe it marked practically the exit of democratic liberalism and the appearance of a deadly fight between its opposite or contrary view, known as communism or anarchy on the one hand, and the League of Nations or the movement to preserve the democratic faith on the other.

2. In India it marked the installation of the same system as if it was a blessing sent down to the earth for the benefit of the human race.

The British race had the proverbial strength to move with caution and with slow steps, and it was this characteristic racial technique that made them introduce the parliamentary rule in India in the year 1937 and not a day too soon. But as luck would have it, the world in the meantime had practically discarded that rule, and had moved far away. And it is neither here nor there to inquire if India would now get, in the remaining portion of the twentieth century, justice and freedom which fate and British caution had kept out of her life for a whole century.

Chapter IV

If the claim to be the representative of justice and freedom cannot be maintained on behalf of the British experiment in India, how then can we account for the Moslem support of it, especially when the British were busy suppressing the only rational outcome of the British rule in India—Indian nationalism? How could the followers of Islam, which stood for equality and brotherhood with a ferocity almost unparalleled in the history of the human race, consistently ally themselves with the British system, which could not even justify its claim to have brought justice and freedom to India? There must be some other reason or explanation for this unfortunate alliance; and the alternatives conceivably are either that it was really and truly political or economic in its character, with Islam as a mere pawn in the game, or that it was meant to be a veiled attack on Hinduism, a diplomatic necessity for the preservation of Islam.

It is precisely the second view that is offered as an explanation for the alliance by those who hold what is known as the cultural, or religious, theory of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem. What the Moham-

medans meant by it, it is argued, was not so much to help the British Cabinet as to ensure the destitution or ruin of the Hindu organization. It is too late in the day for the Mohammedans to commit the blunder of regarding the British government as truly pro-Moslem, much less as the only representative on earth of twentieth-century Islam. But the fact is that some, at least, of the leaders thought that by the disagreeable change of circumstances, especially since the Great War, the Mohammedans and the British had fallen into a natural alliance against the Hindu community. What seemed to be evident to them was that the movement for Indian nationalism, as it came to be firmly and unmistakably embodied in the Indian national Congress, became really a Hindu movement with obvious hostility to both the British and the Mohammedan interest. It was this unfortunate fact more than anything else that brought together the British and the Mohammedans after the whole epoch of avowed hostility in the nineteenth and a good quarter of the twentieth centuries. It may still be not quite true that all the Mohammedans in India take the Congress as essentially Hindu both in its objective and technique. On the contrary, there must be many who feel that it was essentially a movement for political independence, and in some fundamental matters even opposed to the main tenet of the Hindu civilization. But there are few Mohammedans who will believe for a moment that it did not result in increasing the

efficiency, power, and almost unlimited capacity of the Hindu community to defend itself against any attack.

The most glaring fact of the Indian situation is not the alliance between the Mohammedans and the British power, but the driving cause of it, the rise of the Hindu power or community in the guise of the Indian national Congress. At least some of the most representative Mohammedans who have not lost their historic memory will take it as the realization of the Mahratta or Rajput dream, or the fulfilment of the Hindu aspiration, the re-establishment of the Hindu state. To them, and to all those who benefit by the historic memory, the great big Hindu community stands to-day as a danger to Islam just as much as it is a menace to the perpetual rule by the British power. It would have been an act of sheer stupidity if the Mohammedans had not gone over to their natural ally of the twentieth century to build up what defences they could to preserve the Moslem faith. The alliance really and truly was for the purpose of protecting Islam, though unfortunately it had to be diplomatic in its form. The Mohammedans meant Islam when they said so.

This explanation takes its stand on a definite theory about the Hindu-Mohammedan problem which may be described as religious rather than political or economic. We have to find out what exactly that theory is worth before we can test the validity of the explanation. As far as we can gather, the theory

is that the Hindu-Mohammedan problem is uniquely religious in this sense—that nothing but the inevitable clash between Hinduism and Moslem culture and faith could have produced it. If politics or economics do at all play a part in it, they do so as a matter of accident; and most decidedly it should neither be confused with an intercaste problem, nor regarded as the creation of British diplomacy. As a matter of fact there was no such problem in India before the Mohammedans appeared on the scene; and if by any miracle they retraced their steps to their central Asiatic strongholds, the problem too would vanish with them. On the other hand, if by India's supreme destiny no such mischance ever comes to pass, the problem will not be in a hurry to leave the field.

The chief evidence which this theory brings forward to maintain its claim is derived mostly from the nature of the technique which the Mohammedans follow in their onslaught on the Hindu whenever there is any serious dispute with him. And that technique, as is well known, consists in four distinct modes of attack:—

1. Slaughter of the cow.
2. Murder of the genius or the saint among the Hindus.
3. Demolition of temples and images.
4. Abduction of Hindu women.

What happens is that, irrespective of the scale and object of dispute between the Hindu and the Moham-

medan, the former is invariably exposed or subjected to a fourfold attack at the hands of the latter. A sort of offensive reminiscent of the Promenade type is declared against him on all the four fronts simultaneously. It makes no difference if the occasion for the offensive arose out of a dispute over a piece of land, or a piece of classical music, or some political privilege, or even bare economic gain. There never is any attempt on the part of the Mohammedan to localize the quarrel or to choose the form of his weapon according to the nature of the dispute. The claim of the theory is that it is only the inevitable religious and cultural clash between Hinduism and the Moslem culture and faith that could possibly account for the display of this strange technique. No other interpretation seems to be possible.

Surely there is no reason why a land dispute should be associated with the temple and the cow, or why a political issue should be complicated by the extremely antiquated process of abducting women or of murdering the big men. It is to be expected that the Mohammedan is just as intelligent and sensible as the Hindu or the Christian in India. Why, then, should he, of all the other races and peoples, mix up most irrationally the economic and the political with the frankly mystical or supernatural assets of the human race? What has the woman or the cow got to do with a piece of classical music, as regards the source of its authority or the peculiarity of its variation? How do we decide such purely historical or

intellectual issues by abducting women of the opposite school, or breaking down the images in their temples?

The explanation according to these theorists is that such an apparently inscrutable procedure followed necessarily from the essentially religious mentality of the Mohammedans. In so far as they are supposed or expected to take themselves much too strictly or seriously about their religious faith, it was not possible that they should draw a line between the political or economic experience on the one hand, and the frankly religious experience of the human race on the other. What we have to bear in mind is that there was a clear difference between the Hindu and the Mohammedan in their approach to and valuation of the religious life or experience. While the Mohammedan considers it as the final goal or the only essential objective or end of human existence, the Hindu takes it as a mere preparation or stage of discipline which the human individual is called upon to go through for achieving salvation, which to him is the ideal and final goal. A distinction is therefore made by the Hindu between the religious life, which is entirely a matter of preparation and discipline, and what may be called spiritual life, where indeed the final achievement takes place.

It is this distinction that makes all the difference between the Hindu and the Mohammedan in their valuation of the connection between the religious life and the political or economic. To the Hindu all these spheres of life belong to what we call the historic

reality, or the experience of the human race in time and space or the organization which the human race has built up to realize the object of its life. In so far as they all are different modes of discipline and preparation, they should neither be confused with the spiritual, nor left undistinguished. The most decisive feature about them is that they are different modes of preparation, each implying its own duties and obligations or even ceremonious ritual; and what the human individual is expected to do is to perform these separate duties both strictly and scrupulously. Under no circumstances should we forget that to prepare ourselves in the strictest manner conceivable in what we call our religious life is not the same thing as to achieve the end of this preparation, that is to say, salvation or absorption in the divine spirit. The most essential thing for us to remember is that the absorption in the Divine is not an historic event, that it is inconceivable that the divine spirit should actually enter into this historic process even in its highly religious mood. We do not and cannot find the Divine, the heart and core of all mystery, anywhere in the universe, seek how we may. On the other hand, the religious mood or moment is no more nor less entitled to divine favour —or, as we say, grace—than the political or the economic mood and moment. If it be a fact that the divine law bears on the historic course of the universe, it must in the nature of things bear on them equally, political, religious, or economic.

Thus for the Hindu it would be the height of human unwisdom to claim for any phase or type of the religious experience of the human race, which is but an historic event, what could possibly be attached to the spiritual life alone. Whatever its claim to completion or perfection, it is after all a discipline or preparation, and not the final achievement which the human race must inevitably pass through. Even the hardest religious trial of which we can conceive cannot constitute the Divine absorption. That consummation is an event which can take place in the pure realm of the Divine or the spirit or the blessed Eternity, and so, incidentally, according to the Hindu, the prophet appears to be but a historic being whose function it is to set a new discipline or preparation for the final salvation. He is called forth by the needs of the age in which he appears, and it would be as true to say that he is Divine as that the statesman and economist is an eternal being. On the contrary, as creatures of this universe they all are equally subject to its law, which is clear, definite, and adamant. To attribute divinity to them is a mark only of profound forgetfulness or sorrow. The truth is they truly are all limited beings who have a definite task to get through, and can claim just the energy proportionate to their task. In very truth the prophet is no more nor less bound by limitations than the statesman or the philosopher or the artist. To the Hindu it is evident and obvious that he cannot attach finality or absoluteness to anything

that happens or comes to pass in the stage of preparation, or the universe of trials and obligations. They are all subject to review or criticism or even doubt. Religious experiences, like political and economic experiences, can be but relative and changeful; and we should be committing a blunder if we supposed that any one form of religious experience in any one race or time or place held the divine or the absolute being literally. It is inconceivable therefore that we could make a dogma or creed of any of them, and the fact is that the Hindu took them all as necessary and indispensable forms or courses of discipline and preparation for the spiritual life suited to the temperament or need of the age or the people where they appeared.

And yet what we have to keep strictly in mind is that all these conclusions about the true nature and significance of the religious experience of the human race could not possibly be valid if it were not a fact that they were utterly and completely distinct from what is called the spiritual event, the *summum bonum* of human existence. As we have already noted, it was on nothing so much as the unimpeachable truth of that distinction that the whole of the Hindu claim rested. Besides, if it be a fact that the Hindu succeeded in keeping out the dogma, and all the tragedy that it brought into human history in the shape of long and cruel warfare, from his own social economy, the main cause of that would be found in the simple fact that he planted deliberately in the central truth

or the absolute value of human experience outside the range of historic reality.

Conversely, in so far as the Mohammedan for reasons of his own did not see his way to make that distinction, there was no other alternative for him but to make of his own historic experience a dogma or creed by which alone to judge or determine the rest of his life. It was indispensable for him to take his own prophet and his faith as the only and absolute evidence of the divine or the eternal in human history. The alternative was that he would utterly perish with the burning zeal for divine blessedness. Once however the association of the divine or the absolute with the historic and the temporal had taken place, the lines that demarcated the religious and the secular experiences of life necessarily became blurred. In one fell sweep the economic, the cultural, and the political were drawn into the vortex of the religious.

If the religious experience, which happened to be just as human and historic as the political and the economic, had to be accepted as the embodiment of the divine and the absolute value, it was not possible that the economic and the cultural would still retain their integral worth. What must inevitably happen to them is a sure descent to mere instrumental insignificance. And that is what on the whole actually happened. The outlook of life for the Mohammedan became frankly and honestly religious; and the chief objective for him came to take

the form of the propagation of his faith to the four corners of the earth. Naturally the conflicts and clashes to which it led were all religious at bottom, however they might appear in the garb of the political or the economic. The empire, in other words, that the Mohammedan was building up was the empire of the true faith, and his conviction was that once the human race was brought together under the authority and influence of Mohamed's faith, the perpetual conflict in the history of the human race would disappear. The Mohammedan was a visionary, a dreamer, and a world-wide brotherhood was his programme or plan for the human society.

Our object here is not to assess the value of his dream as the historian should, nor to discover the extent of the success that he achieved, and at what cost. One might incidentally point out that exactly the same method of violence which aimed at the realization of the unity of the human race is being repeated to-day both in Europe and that part of the world which neither Asia nor Europe can altogether claim. The point you are called upon to make is that in so far as the Mohammedan by long tradition is not used to keeping the distinction between the secular and the religious clear and definite, he is still found to be descending to such technique as the fourfold mode of attack we have already referred to. At any rate the theory which believes in the religious or cultural nature of the Hindu-Mohammedan conflict finds in this interpre-

tation of the Mohammedan mentality an explanation of Mohammedan technique. The Mohammedan had to adopt this line of attack irrespective of the object or scale of the dispute with the Hindu for two clear reasons:—

1. He was all the time fighting a battle for his faith. All disputes to him were at bottom religious in their character.

2. There can be no question that every one of the four objects of attack was directly or indirectly connected with the religious experience of the Hindu race.

Whether this account of Mohammedan psychology will bear the weight of Mohammedan history may certainly be questioned; whether again the Mohammedan on the whole kept uniformly true to his peculiar religious conception is also a matter of serious inquiry. Before we engage in such enquiries we have to bring out with precision and clearness how the woman and the cow of the Hindu race came to appeal to the Mohammedan as if they were bound up with their religious assets, just exactly as their gods and saints did. We see clearly enough why the Mohammedan, for whom all disputes at bottom were religious, should go straight for the religious strongholds of the Hindus, whatever the nature of the disputes might be. If all interests are directly and indirectly religious in their character, it must be the religious strength of his rival or antagonist which is the only strength worth considering that would

require his deadly attention. In any case, more than the political and the economic, the definitely known religious centres would have to be dealt with firmly and seriously; for it is there that the strength of his antagonist at its highest is to be found. It would obviously be all the more so if his rival, like the Hindus, happened to attach unusual importance to his religious assets. The attack on all the four objects may therefore easily be explained by the central conviction of the Mohammedan that they not only formed the chief centre of strength compared with the political and economic, but specially so in the case of the Hindu who did not approach religion in the same way as, for instance, the European did. In other words, in so far as the Hindu like the Mohammedan considers religious discipline and interest as absolutely essential for his salvation, and not as a mere matter of choice, he must be considered to be at his strongest where his religious strongholds lie.

But how could the cow and the woman be supposed to form any part of the stronghold in exactly the same way as the image and the saint did? It is not difficult to see at all why the saint or the picked men in the Hindu community should have been taken as religious or mystical centres by the Mohammedan. A race of people who built their culture on prophecy and chose deliberately to abide by the decision of the prophet cannot but regard exceptional men as nearest of kin to them. Somehow the divine element, or the power that makes for absolute-

ness, is bound to percolate to them. Naturally they cannot but be regarded as all partaking of the element which goes to form the core of mystical nature. To make the attack on the Hindu successful, they had to be removed from their earthly existence on the ground that they represent the stronghold of the Hindu power. Besides it is well known to the Mohammedan how the men of genius stood nearest to the fountain-head from which came the light which gave the Hindu his sole object of adoration. Most obviously the temple, like the mosque or the church, is the sanctuary where for the true devotee and the initiate the spirit of the universe is felt when, after his day's toil or before he begins it, he surrenders his soul to its guidance. As the old sayings of all the races have it, it is here that the religious assets of the human race find their peaceful rest; and for the Hindu it is almost the last place he visits before taking his plunge into the eternal pilgrimage of souls.

But what exactly must be the reason why the cow or the woman should be regarded equally in the same light as the image and the saint? Why did the Mohammedan slaughter the cow or abduct the women for the sake of Islam, and with the conviction that he was breaking down the stronghold of the Hindu faith? It is impossible to believe that, if the Mohammedan abducted Hindu women, he did so for sheer carnal desire. The Mohammedan is no more nor less carnal than the Hindu or the Christian,

and it would be stupid to suggest that the cow was slaughtered merely for the sustenance to life that it offered. Could not then the reason be found in just the conviction of the Mohammedan, that to the Hindu, as a matter of fact, neither the woman nor the cow stood in the same profane esteem as they so obviously did to other races and peoples of history? By the virtue of parentage alone the Indian Mohammedan must have felt how the woman was nothing less than an object of worship to the Hindu. It was his birthright, which was accentuated by a common life of the Hindu for centuries together, to know how she was adored by the Hindu as a living goddess in the home where she rules. It must have been patent to him how she was identified with nothing less than the formative process of the universe when he rose to the height of his metaphysical mood. For both the Hindu and the Mohammedan equally it was a matter of honour and credit to India that the woman should have been regarded as nothing less than a mystic presence and a guardian deity of the home which protects the child.

In exactly the same way was the cow, to his knowledge, reduced to a mystic symbol for the economic existence of the Hindu, and brought as near to the ideal of motherhood as the woman. It is an elementary truth which anybody can inhale in India that between the woman and the cow they immortalized the whole protection and guidance of the Hindu home. It could be nothing but caprice in the religious

history of man that the more the Mohammedan realized the profound significance of the woman and the cow in Hindu religious belief, the more should he be inspired to deprive him of both. It is only a religious fate, to quote a very ancient proverb, that has the hardihood or temerity to remove the religious anchorage of a people. If the Mohammedan with his deep and profound religious conviction sought to destroy the Hindu woman, perhaps one of the finest products of the human race, the reason was to be found in the simple fact that his religion, as it rose out of the acrid heat of the desert, gave him no peace but kept him perpetually on the move.

But can we seriously suggest that, if the cow is being slaughtered again, and images are still being broken, it is really a sign of the old clash between Hinduism and the Moslem culture and faith coming back to life again? Is the Mohammedan still the same orthodox believer as he was in the few centuries that followed the first propagation of his faith? It is difficult to believe that the Mohammedan stress on the importance of religious life to the exclusion of the rest should have continued to this day, or that the tendency of his mentality to confuse the distinction between the secular and the religious should be still persisting. If nothing else, the civilized world of the twentieth century must have been a blow to all orthodoxy; and, as far as one can gather, as a purely traditional cast of thought it seems to be steadily disappearing. Why then should the Mohammedan of all

people be an exception to this general rule? If the Christian and the Hindu, for instance, have equally been hit by it, and hit very hard, if it has been difficult for all to preserve any faith to-day, whether it is exclusive or comprehensive, untouched by doubt or even suspicion, could the Mohammedan alone normally expect to be immune from doubt and suspicion? In very truth there is no system of philosophy or religious practice or ethical code or even social system which has not been riddled by criticism and doubt. The world to-day is the hotbed of doubts and distrusts all rising out of a considerable lack in any faith or system or code of living, and the only intelligent position it has been possible for anybody to hold is that the human race in all its different spheres of experience must by now have reached the point of an *impasse*. There is no choice before it between standing still and moving on as it will have to move on if it chooses to avoid the nemesis that overtakes all stagnation.

How then could the educated, the cultured, and the thoughtful Mohammedan be supposed to have missed this one outstanding fact of the twentieth century, and what grounds could there be even for a moment of doubt that, while the rest of the civilized world went on casting off ideas, habits, and practices, however old and venerable, for sheer uselessness and incongruity, the Mohammedan should be the only unfortunate one who chose not to follow suit? And it is neither history nor contemporary fact to suggest

that the Mohammedan did not try to rationalize his faith. It is an open secret how the philosophers of the age which gave birth to the renaissance in Europe were largely Moslem in their origin and faith; and as far as we know Mohammedan culture was rich enough as a matter of fact to offer "reason" as full scope as any other culture ever did.

Then there was the mystical movement within the strict confines of Islam, and it makes no difference to its Islamic claim that sufism came into existence only after Islam had come into contact with the Aryan tradition in Persia and India. If we follow the history of the Mogul period, we find supreme efforts at rationalization which were initiated so superbly by the greatest emperor of the Mohammedans in India, Akbar the Great. Besides, there were many movements in India on a small and large scale which took their origin from the contact between Islam and Hinduism and had for their sole object the equal rationalization of them both. And, finally, the recent brilliant activities of the strict Mohammedan communities outside India have completely eliminated orthodoxy, only to give Islam the chance of a rejuvenated life. Even the nominal authority of the Moslem church, the Khalifat, the last stronghold of religious supremacy, has broken down, and for all practical purposes there is nothing to chooes at the moment between the Turkish and Persian states on the one hand, and the European states on the other.

What ground then can still be found behind the

claim that the Mohammedan, of all the civilized races, is still alone in persisting in his orthodoxy, or that his medieval mentality has not undergone any appreciable change? And why should we take it for granted that after centuries of common life between the Hindu and the Mohammedan, during which exchange of ideas and views must have taken place on a sustained and considerable scale, they should be as ignorant of each other as they ever conceivably were? How can we possibly believe that the Mohammedan in spite of his refinement, culture and education, failed to detect the only thing pointedly real about the Hindu, his long and sustained quest of the Divinity for hundreds of centuries? Would it not be puerile to suggest that even six or seven centuries were not enough to convince his virile mind how the Hindu appreciated at least just as much as any race or people what is meant by the purity and simplicity of religious worship? Did any race of people on the face of this earth ever seek the eternal and the infinite literally for its own sake, utterly oblivious of the fact that it did not yield even a text for a suitable prayer? Where, even, is an analogy to be found in the whole history of the human race to the worship of the formless and unfathomable Absolute which never ceased for a day ever since it rang out in the depth of an unforgettable past? Can it really be held for a moment that the Mohammedan, of all people, never had a chance to know for certain what exactly

idolatry meant in the Hindu scheme? It is futile to argue, and blasphemy to insinuate, that the supreme religious figure of human history, to whom all civilized people owed their message from on high, and who never ceased to keep the light of deep and earnest faith burning, should rank as idolaters. And yet, if even the fetish worshipper is actually given a place in the social system and treated with frank respect and sympathy, would that mean a descent to rank idolatry, or a treatment of it so that it too may blossom forth into pure ecstasy?

Could not the Mohammedan, on the contrary, with his high ideal of brotherhood and equality, find in it the only way of materializing that ideal? Has there been a single instance in human history, except the Hindu attempt, where it has been possible to work out their ideal without a preliminary suppression or destruction of varied claims? What, indeed, is left to equality and brotherhood if the process that leads up to it leaves a wreckage of human hopes and claims behind? How can we preserve equality as such if it were conditioned by the test of worth and value, especially where they were mere matters of opinion and differed much too fundamentally to be reduced to a common form? Could we distinguish such equality from what is called homogeneity, which is the one feature that marks out all compact groups of men, especially when they are at war one with another?

It would be much better if we called such historic

attempts by their proper name, i.e. processes burning with zeal to reduce all differences and varieties by sheer force to one uniform level of religious faith or moral code or political existence. The Hindu at any rate did not consider such attempts to be consistent with the spirit of history, and frankly worked out a pattern of society which excluded violence and adopted assimilation as its only mode. That is the chief reason and the only legitimate explanation of the fact that the fetish or image worshipper finds a place in his scheme, just as much as the absolutist and the worshipper of pure form. If this is confused with idolatry, instead of being welcomed and appreciated as the highest expression of humanity or equality, human history will not produce a better or more accurate chance of either. For ourselves we refuse to believe that the Mohammedan or the Christian ever really confused the Hindu with idolater, especially after they had the chance of being familiar with the ideal and mode of his life.

It would be rank heresy to suggest that the Mohammedan who has lived with him for so many centuries was not even refined and cultured enough to appreciate the truth of his religious life, or missed anything in his highly elaborated social order. As a matter of fact, the real clash between them, as it must have taken place in dead earnest and in extreme fury in the dead past, left the field long, long ago. The truth is that both culturally and from the point of view of religious faith, they settled down long ago to a life

of mutual respect, sympathy, and appreciation. They know that they formed a life together for good or evil; and if anything is seriously disturbing them at the moment, it is their dread or apprehension that the world might cease to value religious truth and the spiritual light as such as it never did in the past.

Chapter V

The Hindu-Mohammedan problem to-day is by no means a religious problem, and the Mohammedan is not just a back number who is determined to keep back the march of time by the sheer inertia of a medieval mind. If he is still found to be carrying on a mode of fighting with the Hindu which is strongly reminiscent of his medieval days, the explanation is to be found elsewhere. The religious hypothesis will not work, as the strictly religious and cultural conflict between the Hindu and the Mohammedan dissolved long ago, and it will mean a deep and serious reflection upon the whole community of the Mohammedans to think that it has not. We for ourselves cannot afford to believe that the Mohammedan is any more or any less cultured or dogmatic than the Hindu or the Christian. It is inconceivable for us to hold for a moment that the Mohammedans alone of all the races and communities in the twentieth century are behaving as if they never came out of their primitive and medieval mind. We refuse to believe that they are the only primitives left on this earth; or that if the progress of the world is held up, it is for them and nothing else.

We would add that if the primitive is to be given a place and status in the social scheme of all ages, it should be frankly and openly distributed among the Hindus, the Christians, and the Mohammedans alike. We should have the courage to find it as well in the high type of German or Italian or British imperialism, as in the spiritual absolutism of the Hindus or the religious exclusiveness of the Mohammedans. It does not do us any harm to remember that at that rate the primitive is but the other pole of the civilized, which means in our vocabulary that it is just a term for a compromise. In other words, the civilized and the primitive are indispensable to one another, and both stand supremely deficient and wantonly provocative. But this is not exactly what we are interested in discussing at the moment. What we are anxious to suggest is that the Mohammedan is behaving just as anybody else, neither more awkwardly than the Hindu or the Christian, nor less shabbily or incoherently. The fact is that they are all caught in the tail of the comet that has been sweeping them for at least half a century.

If, therefore, the religious and the cultural theory would not work, what really would work? How shall we account for the conflict between the Hindu and the Mohammedan, and what is equally important, for the peculiar technique which the Mohammedan follows in his attack on the Hindu? Whatever conclusion we might have come to as regards the mutual appreciation or valuation of each other's religious

faiths and cultural achievements, that would not obviate the necessity for us to account for these two disagreeable facts. We should never forget that the conflict is there as well as the technique, and it makes no difference to their grim reality if they have not strictly a cultural or religious parentage. Somehow or other they arose in Hindu-Mohammedan history, and for some reason or other the technique survived to do service to an age much later than that of its origin. The question, therefore, is how they actually arose? And what is the cause of the continuity of the technique?

Here we shall go back to our sociologist again and to all those in the group who are frankly opposed to the religious hypothesis. The fact is that they all held that the conflict arose practically at the origin of the British rule in India, and has kept step with its growth and enlargement ever since. To them the problem in the main is the creation of the British policy, or of the principle of administration which the British thought they must follow to make the British rule a success. The part of India which they chose for elucidating their claim was Bengal, which formed the chief seat of the British government at the time and determined the policy of the whole country. It was again to what is known as the "permanent settlement," which Lord Cornwallis introduced into Bengal, that they specially referred as the chief source of the struggle. If we analyze carefully what the bearing of this British gift on Indian land tenure

was, we shall be in a position to trace the gradual rise, not only of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem but of practically every problem that British rule in India has been associated with. The social, cultural, and economic troubles which are characteristically modern, all arise from this system and its variants in other parts of India. And if we anticipate a little we may add that none of them will be removed, or even appreciably mitigated, so long as that policy has not been abrogated or removed.

Yet it ought not to be difficult to see what that policy was and how very elementary and simple it looked in its execution. It simply meant the introduction of what may be called landlordism in the place of the old village community, and what it proposed to lay out was a new system of land tenure with its peculiar form of realizing rents and raising revenue. This system it sought to put into practice with the aid and help of the spirit and technique of capitalism. It so happened that the landlords were chosen or created by a principle for which only the capitalistic valuation of money in European polity could account. If we keep in mind these two simple points, landlordism and capitalism, we shall get the ruling principles that lay behind the whole of the basic structure of British administration as it arose in the nineteenth century. It will be perfectly easy for us to understand how the whole trend of European individualism entered into India by the back door of the British rule.

Before we proceed to analyze the form of the early British administration in the light of these two principles, let us briefly refer to the exact situation in which the British authorities in India happened to be placed, so far as their financial strength was concerned. There is ample evidence to show that for various reasons, one of which was the constant need of supplying the sinews of war, they were perpetually in want of funds. The historian will tell you when this impecunious condition actually ended; at any rate, it did not quite end even in the time of Lord William Bentinck, who had to contemplate the idea of dismantling the Taj Mahal to raise funds by putting up to auction its valuable marbles. In the time of Lord Cornwallis, at any rate, it was evident how the need was still acute enough to serve as the determining factor behind the policy of landlordism which he introduced. What was actually done by Lord Cornwallis was the creation of a large number of Hindu landlords to be held responsible for the raising of the revenue. This was altogether a new method of raising the revenue in India; for even during the whole of the Mogul administration the authorities who were entrusted with the collection of revenues were not owners or proprietors of the land from which the revenue came, but mere collectors, or "farmers" as they were called.

The point to be noted here is that it was the Hindu who was chosen as the landlord in preference to the Mohammedan, precisely because he of all people in

India at the time could secure the revenue or "deliver the goods." The fact is that the Hindu was much more wealthy than the Mohammedan and held control over the trade and finance of the country, and that situation partly resulted from two very interesting features, among others, of the Mahommedan community. As a matter of fact:

1. They were averse to trade and commerce partly because of the high status they enjoyed as the rulers of the country. We have to remember that we are dealing with Mohammedan history in the medieval days.

2. The Mohammedan law set its face against usury, either as the result of the Christian influence or as a matter of independent taste.

Whatever the conditioning circumstances might have been to put the Hindu in this superior financial position over the Mohammedan, the early British experiment in India, both for constant shortness of funds and the interest of trade which was its chief objective, had to seek the Hindus' aid and co-operation. Above everything else the revenue had to be made safe, and the market for British products and British purchase had to be secured.

There were, of course, other causes which made the selection of the Hindus inevitable, and of these the frankly political one can hardly be over-estimated. After all it was from the Moslems that the British race wrested their authority and power; whatever might be the meaning of the gradual decline of the Mogul

power, and however it might be interpreted as the direct result of the steady rise in the Hindu supremacy for nearly a century before the British rule began, the rule of the country all the time was in the hands of the Moguls. The sovereign authority by all the statutes was theirs, and the British had to wrest it from them if they wrested it from anybody. Naturally it was not possible that the rule could be started under the aegis and shelter of a frank and hearty co-operation with the Mohammedans, and there was no other alternative for the British but to count on the sympathy, active support, and co-operation of the Hindus.

No historian will fail to record how this co-operation built up steadily and during decades amounting to a century what is called the British administration or British trade in India. It is by no means necessary to add that the Hindus as a civilized people had a superior type of gentleness and manners which, combined with their well-known rational attitude or outlook on life, made dealings with them exceptionally useful and easy. The British authorities could not expect more ideal agents to establish their credit in the country, whether in their administrative or in the economic sphere. If they practically restricted landlordism to Hindus, and if, as a direct consequence, they put the Hindus in a position of vantage after long centuries of Mahommedan occupation of the country, neither of them had any real reason to repent that act.

Huge and far-reaching consequences, however, followed from this apparently simple and almost naïve political move on the part of the British. Its immediate result was a serious disturbance in the relationship that prevailed between the Hindus and the Mahommedans up to that time. The creation of landlordism, and the selection of Hindus as landlords in large numbers, seriously affected the status and position of the Mohammedans who had been exercising political authority and power during the Mahommedan rule. No community of men in any part of the world would or could face this sudden reversal in status with equanimity. There are authorities who hold that the British policy was meant not merely as a calculating offence to Mohammedan pride, but as a step to deprive the whole community of its middle class, its only source of advice and guidance in time of distress.

Yet it was not the middle or the aristocratic class of the Mahommedans alone who were directly affected by the way the revenue system of Bengal was changed by Lord Cornwallis. The large masses who were on the land, where four-fifths of the Mohammedan community belonged, were deprived by his policy of the rights and privileges which occupancy in the Indian system implied. Consequently the bulk of the Mohammedan community was not only deprived of their middle and aristocratic classes, but put at the mercy of landlordism, which by accident came to be vested in the Hindu. A fresh cause of dis-

agreement therefore between the Hindus and the Mohammedans naturally arose. It is here, according to the sociologist, that the origin of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem is to be sought. Whatever the disagreement between them might have been in the past, and however they might have assumed the proportions of serious cultural and religious clashes, the feature and character of the British phase of the problem can be wholly accounted for by the British policy which Lord Cornwallis introduced into India, or by the variants of the policy which were practised in other parts of India.

The problem is entirely political or economic in its character, and has no real connection with the religion and culture of the two peoples, whatever illusion the technique of the Mohammedan fight might create for the moment. It is necessary that this view and interpretation of the problem should be analysed at some length, especially as we want to find out what exactly is its strength and how deep it has gone down to the roots of our common life.

It would not be possible, however, for us to take up that analysis with any prospect of success before we discovered more adequately the nature of the change that resulted from the introduction of landlordism in India through the capitalistic technique. The fact is that not only the Hindu-Mohammedan problem, but every other problem which has been associated with the British period, took its rise from

this policy and the change that it brought about. What we have to remember is that we are brought here face to face, not with a mere economic or political policy, but with the whole structural change in the Indian social system which an apparently naïve revenue scheme seemed to have brought about.

If the Hindus and the Mohammedans, one might suggest, have disagreed so violently after centuries of common life, the reason of this strange occurrence will have to be looked for in the revolution that took place in Indian conditions by the impact of landlordism, capitalism, and individualism on its indigenous form. The point is not whether the Englishman meant it or had any intelligent idea of it; perhaps it was beyond his comprehension, especially as many English historians prefer to call him in his initial activities a mere trader or business man with nothing more responsible than a medieval equipment. The chief point is that it happened, and came about like the summer epidemic, with the British policy and nothing else as its sole incubator. The Hindu-Mohammedan problem, like any other problem, followed inevitably from the structural change which came to pass in the whole of Indian life. It resulted in the loss and breakdown of the common and joint life in the community, and what is essential, therefore, is that we must find out what that common life was, the loss of which to-day is the sole cause of the Indian distress. In other words, we have

practically to raise the whole issue of what is known as village community; for it is in the village that the land was situated on which the tenant lived, and it was from him, in the village again, that the landlord was expected to realize the rent for paying his revenue to the British government.

Chapter VI

The question that we have now to discuss is how landlordism came to introduce such a radical change in the village economy that the whole scheme of that economy was upset. We have to ask in what way exactly did the tenant suffer interference in the age-long enjoyment of his rights and privileges from the new method of raising revenue. How indeed did the new landlords replace their prototypes, if any, of the preceding ages? Finally, what feature of the village economy was it that came to bear the brunt of attack directly and straightaway?

The issue is for the jurist and the historian, and it is not possible that we should go into it with anything like completeness. What we can do is to refer broadly to the general principle of the village community scheme and try to indicate how it was contravened by the idea that lay behind landlordism. The point that we should bear in mind is that the policy of landlordism, however it may be explained in the light of the financial need of the East India Company in the early nineteenth century, had behind it the outlook of the European or British polity. And similarly the village community into

which it was deliberately introduced was conceived in a totally different outlook, that which the Indian polity had cherished and cultivated for hundreds of centuries. The introduction of landlordism, therefore, meant for all practical purposes bringing the European and the British outlook into direct contact with the Indian outlook. Here is an instance of what is called by the anthropologist "culture contact," and that in a very real sense. Yet the point is not whether the two cultures met at once in full-dress uniform. They did not; but the meeting that took place was not a mere gathering of the British traders and Indian customers in the Indian market which had been fairly well known to the world. It was a meeting in a more responsible sense of the Europeans and the Indians in which their faiths and cultures, as well as social polities, met as active forces though as yet neither fully self-conscious, nor with any great ambitious plan.

There was at least one immediate consequence of this meeting, the passage of the doctrine of ownership into the arena of the Indian village community. There was no such doctrine known or practised in the Indian juristic system during the whole course of its existence. On the contrary, the doctrine that ruled in its place was its direct opposite, known as the caste system, and this had been in operation for hundreds of centuries. It is a fact that no other conqueror or invader or raider ever contemplated the idea of altering or upsetting it. Not even the Moguls

thought it necessary or expedient to change this Indian scheme, based on the doctrine of services and functions, by the principle of ownership which their jurists, too, had propounded and in which they believed. The collectors of revenue in the Mohammedan times, as we have already suggested, were "farmers" and not owners or proprietors of the land from which the revenue came. The Indian village system was left untouched by them in principle and fully respected in their actual administration.

What then did the British experiment really mean? What does the principle of ownership truly imply with regard to the valuation of interests and their arrangement in the social scheme? In what exact way did the valuation and arrangements of interests differ from that of the Indian scheme which was based on the negation of ownership? This is really the point at issue so far as we are concerned. We have to find out how exactly the relationship changes between, for instance, the King and the peasant on the land, or between the representatives to whom his authority was delegated and the men who occupied the land. Did the change affect the relationship among the various castes which formed the community? Did it affect the mode and manner of administration which prevailed in the village?

We would again remind our readers that it is not possible that we should discuss these questions as a jurist should. Our treatment is bound to be very

broad and would just skim the salient points of the two polities:

1. That which is based on the doctrine of ownership.

2. That which is based on the doctrine of service and culture.

To begin with the latter, ownership as a legal or juristic concept had not too much significance in Hindu jurisprudence. As a matter of fact, beginning from the King down to the peasant in the occupation of land, nobody was considered as the owner of the land. Ownership, as a matter of fact, did not or could not vest in any person, however high up in the hierarchy, if there was one, or however low in the scheme. The only conceivable way of talking about ownership in Hindu jurisprudence would be to associate it with the *corpus* of the village community. That would be equally the surest way of depriving it of its salient feature, that of excluding a possible hostile claim disputing the right of ownership. Where no possible claim can arise, either by mistake or greed, to challenge or dispute the right of an owner, ownership as a right or privilege ceases to have any significance. No jurist would waste his time in defining its nature and limits. To suggest therefore that the village community was the owner is the same thing as to suggest that God was the owner of the universe to which that community belonged.

If, however, the concept of ownership was practically discarded from Hindu jurisprudence, what

came to be regarded as of supreme importance in its place was the question of dealing with the produce of the land. In the Hindu jurisprudence it may with some reason be argued that the question of the legal rights and privileges practically began and ended with the question of the distribution of the produce of the land. What is specially to be noted in this connection is that the right to decide what should be the proportionate share to the different groups or castes in the community did not belong to the King or to any one authorized group. It was laid down in the code which assumed the supreme rule or authority. Here is the root of Hindu jurisprudence:

1. The recognition of an authority which is completely impersonal.
2. The principle which it lays down as the corner-stone of the social organization is the broadest principle conceivable.

We will deal with both these points presently, but what we should point out at once is that the code laid down the proportionate shares in the produce of the land according to the functions and services of the different groups which constituted the community. The King, for instance, got one sixth of the produce; and there is no group, whatever its function, which was not entitled to a share. To talk in modern phraseology, all the groups were shareholders as a matter of right and nothing but shareholders. The King was just as good or bad as the peasant or the priest or the physician or the shoe-

maker. They all earned their share in the sense that they all functioned separately and contributed their special technical services towards the fulfilment of the needs of the community.

We cannot however expect to follow the significance of a co-operative body like the village in India, with its system of services and functions, unless we set it against the background of the main constitution which works it from behind. As a matter of fact both the principle of caste which forms the cornerstone of the Hindu civilization, and the impersonal code, Dharma Shastra, as we have suggested already, have to be at least broadly known if we propose to get at the inwardness of the village system. A sense of that inwardness, it is expected, is bound to arise if we keep in view the central point of the Hindu social effort, that the group as group should form the unit of the social organization.

Herein lies the secret of the whole epic of Hindu sociology. When the extreme importance of the group as the unit was emphasized, its negative significance lay in the implied injunction that the individual *as* the individual should not and cannot form the unit. Why and how this rejection came to be proposed is another story, whether the distinction was actually made, and the whole system was planned out on the basis of a conscious and deliberate rejection, is a historical point with which this book is not concerned. But it cannot be repeated too often that it was the group, and not the individual, which was

made the unit or cornerstone of the Hindu social polity when as a matter of fact the choice or selection might have been exactly the reverse. History is full of instances where it was the reverse, as we shall presently have occasion to discuss.

The distinction, however, between the individual who constitutes the group and the group itself, whatever its value and truth, may not be so easily intelligible. It is not clear enough even to the high-water mark of speculative thought. What it is possible, therefore, to elicit is a broad and unimpeachable feature with its juristic and sociological consequences. That broad feature is that, while the individual as individual is supposed to be unique and distinct without any "instances" to its credit, the group as group is just the phenomenon which bears instances. For example, while the coal miners of England could be easily described as a group with millions of individuals as its instances, any one miner like Bevan or Lindsay will be regarded as only an individual who cannot be confused with any other, much less identified with the group of coal miners. This is elementary cultural experience of the twentieth century; and the feature of it which is useful and essential for our purpose lies in the suggestion that the group really is an embodiment of what is called the common purpose, or the unity, or the agreements of the many individuals.

It is assumed that these individuals, in so far as they are instances of the group, are identical with

reference to the definite ideal of interest or purpose, that they all, in spite of their differences and disagreements, are literally at one with regard to their purpose. The group is only another name for the common purpose, or unity, or agreement. So that if we could dissociate them from the differences or disagreements, or rather if we could separate their differences from their agreements, we could easily get two altogether different entities:

1. A pile of disagreements and differences which have been responsible for all the ugly things that happen in human history.

2. A pile of agreements which are responsible for all the constructive efforts of the human race that create beauty and happiness.

Yet what we must carefully bear in mind is that the individual as individual is not to be identified with either the one or the other pile. His individuality falls outside them altogether. As an individual he or she really and truly is an inscrutable being who both agrees with and differs from other individuals, but never exhausts himself in those agreements and differences. As the logician puts it, these agreements and disagreements will not be intelligible without a hypothesis or assumption about individuality. It follows that we cannot deny individuality, although it is equally undeniable, according to the logician, that agreements or disagreements can on no account be equated with it.

What the Hindu jurist or sociologist seemed to

have meant when he emphasized the importance of the group as the unit of the social system was that, for the purpose of social organization, the individual as individual does not exist. For him it was the agreements and the disagreements alone that matter. Whether this meant a deficiency or a defect in his procedure is another story; whether, again, he failed to build up a perfect social order because of this initial failure to take account of the individual as such, is a matter for discussion. If we want to follow the line he exactly chose, and the assumptions it implied, we have to keep in mind that he discarded the individual as individual as of no sociological or juristic consequence.

It followed, therefore, that no Hindu organization was expected to make room for the individual who did not belong to any group at all. To the Hindu such an individual was not merely an oddity or anachronism, but for all practical purposes non-existent. An individual, if he is to exist at all, must belong to some one group or other. As it is said in India, there can be stray cattle but no stray human individual. The social organization was the place for social effort, for realizing common purposes and common agreements. It was not the place where individuals can exist and function as if they had no relationship with one another. For such an eventuality, which is another name for caprice, the Hindu has no use. Even the ascetic, who has a direct service to render to the social organization,

belongs to a religious body. It is only when he is achieving his final goal of absorption in the divine that he can claim to be really by himself, and even then he is only shedding his individuality altogether. As history recorded for such a great soul as Buddha, is was not possible that he should absorb himself from his social obligation as he did not want salvation so long as every creature in the wide universe was not in a position to claim it.

Still it did not follow that the individual must live and die in the group or the caste into which he was born. What followed simply was that he must, if he is to exist as a social being, belong to some caste or group. If it so happened that he could not escape from his inner promptings, and a new faith or vision seized him which did not coincide with that of any existing groups, he could go out and form a group of his own. There was no bar to his forming a new group. If he wanted to satisfy his individuality, he was given every opportunity to do so; only his individual tastes and beliefs must be capable of taking a group shape sooner or later. In other words, until an opinion or a belief or a practice was found to have sufficient potency or strength in it to attract a sufficient number of men and women for a group life, it was not conceded social recognition. The individual could make experiments with such an opinion, but wholly within the confines of his personal life without interfering with the smooth and steady course of the existing groups. If his personal experiments,

in addition to his caste obligations, gave rise automatically to his group proportion, he was at liberty to leave the caste he was born into and form a new one.

Whether this still proved to be too severe a strain on new experiments and the satisfaction of the individual's personal need is another story, but incidentally it offered a very ingenious solution of what is known as the minority problem of the twentieth century. If the members of a group or caste, for instance, happened to differ from the majority, and there was no chance of unanimity being reached—which was the usual method of arriving at a decision—two courses were open:

1. The majority and the minority were called upon to abstain from the realization of their programme equally.

2. The minority was allowed to leave the caste and form a group of its own outside the caste if it could. The minority was not frustrated off-hand. It was not called upon to submit to the majority and to hold its minority view in abeyance. Nor was it allowed to claim recognition so long as it was not potent enough to form a group. In the Hindu organization, as is well known, continuous activity and perpetual realization was neither a possibility nor a necessity. There was room for restraint, sacrifice and compromise.

The next point of great importance, therefore, that followed from the recognition of the group as

the unit was the acceptance or recognition of the group as such, irrespective of its creed, colour or proportion. The group had its right to recognition, based on the fact of its being a group and nothing else. The same social organization naturally would make room for groups of varied types. It made no difference whether they rose in extremely different regional conditions, nor did it matter if they descended from remote and distant human stocks. Certainly it was of no moment if they professed and practised faiths, cultures and economies which seemed to be even incompatible and menacing for a common home. Even if they created almost inevitably too many complications for intimate contact and fusion, it did not follow that they necessarily affected the possibilities of a social life in common. Precisely because of this broad and liberal view taken of the group character, a mere peculiarity in a group was never considered to be an offence sufficient to deprive it of the political or economic privilege. The only instance of disqualification when the group automatically fell into the sad predicament of group suicide arose when the group happened to question the right of any other group to exist. Short of this, even extreme behaviour of a group did not as a matter of fact exclude it from the source of its economic maintenance or political security.

It followed equally that the question of selection or elimination with regard to the place of a group in any one system never arose. As they were all re-

garded as differentiations of the same human species, there was nothing to choose between one and another so far as the right to recognition went. If selection was made at all, its principle was based upon the spirit of nature and history as it appeared in the long vistas of time. To the Hindu the only rational way of preserving the human species was to follow the course which history and nature took after numerous experiments and long centuries. So any instance of the Hindu social order will be found to accommodate races, cultures and faiths from one extreme to another, as if it were an epitome of the human species.

Chapter VII

What was the function of the groups after they had been incorporated into the social organization? What really was the main objective of the social organization? Even if we suppose that every group stood with sufficient agreements for joint activities, if the carpenters, the weavers, the teachers, the priests, etc., were all there ready to function in their various capacities, what could be their common objective? What is the significance and value of social existence?

The main significance lay in what may be called the preservation of the human species and the fulfilment of the end which the human individual is supposed to cherish. What is clearly under consideration here is the reality of the human species and the need of salvation for each and every individual that ever lived as human. It would be impossible to get at the meaning of the Hindu effort if we did not keep in view these two broad and sweeping facts:

1. That there is the human species.

2. That the only value or end worth considering for the human individual is salvation or absorption in the absolute.

Evidently both these assertions touch issues which seem to be either out of all proportion to the standpoint of man and woman as they are found working out their daily routine, or much too difficult for ordinary human comprehension. If the practical work of social organization is bound up with them one may even doubt if we shall ever succeed in achieving any great result. When we find it difficult to understand what our neighbour in the next street really and truly means by his actions, what prospects have we of following the drift of the human species? If we are perpetually becoming at cross-purposes with our fellow-members of the same community, and periodically going to war with nations and states which belong to the same culture and faith as we do, what is the point of saying that social organization, to be at all effective, ought to have the preservation of the human species as its main objective?

On the other hand, if we do not know and cannot make up our mind as to what should be our aim, if even the direct and immediate economic and cultural needs are difficult to satisfy, is it even plausible to suggest that human individuals, while they are functioning in a social organization, should aim at nothing less than salvation or absorption in the divine? We do not even know the mind of the one we think we love; we are not assured if it is possible to identify ourselves with even the nearest and the dearest in our life. What chances are there for reaching up to the height of divine communion?

These are all legitimate questions, especially in the twentieth century when we have practically lost our faith in everything except perhaps the direct or the immediate. To talk about the human species or the divine reality to-day might easily be a waste of energy when evidence for any value or reality is so earnestly questioned.

The fact is that the Hindu was not frightened either by the sceptical mood or the exigencies of the daily routine. What he formulated in his social system was meant just exactly for that daily routine, for the men and women who are busy turning over the earth with the ploughshare, or running a parliamentary discussion, or offering prayers from the mosque or the temple.

Perhaps it is a fact that we are never outside the horizon of the divine. Perhaps we are all the time as much dependent on the furthest and the remotest fringe of the human species as on the immediate and the present. The Hindu at any rate was convinced long ago that the human species was one vast organization with numerous groups professing varied faiths, cultures and economies.

What he never ceased to hold firmly was that success or failure in any group within this vast organization depended on the successful working of the whole species. It was a part of his conviction that, even though we can map out just the corner of the landscape which is within our reach, it does not follow that we are not actually taking part in the

work that is being done beyond the horizon, or that forces or agents quite unknown to us are not working to keep this vast organization going. The range even of the human species in which we are so directly interested need not be measured by the range of our empirical or scientific knowledge. It does not follow that the human mind which has been known to us in the twentieth century is the only agency capable of running the human species. All that follows is that we have to do our best for the part that we know and can regulate at times, but it is not our duty to claim that, with our efforts to organize the fortunes of the human species, all efforts stand and fall.

We might at least bear in mind one simple truth, that no part of human experience is free or immune from the rigour of necessity or determination which law in its purest sense implies. There is no control or authority which any of our actions can command over anything existent. We have to act under strict conditions all the time. What is the point, then, of denying at least the *one* agency which lays down the law? We need not deify it or even personify it, but can we afford to question its authority, however dumb it may seem to ears that are closed?

The Hindu at any rate did not build upon reason alone. If he built, he did it equally on mystical experience. That is perhaps the chief reason why the human species and the need of salvation never left his horizon. Most naturally the scale on which he had to build was as comprehensive as it could possibly

be; and after that, the main objective that he kept in view was necessarily the highest conceivable. It was not possible, with his long experience, that he should set his store by philosophy and science alone, even though it was obvious to him that we could eschew them altogether only at our own peril. As the scriptures put it, the scriptures themselves are by no means the final word and authority. With all their recorded wisdom, the individual is still left free to form his own judgment and if necessary to start afresh and go back on them, provided only that he must get the sanction of the group. Besides, criticism in its pure, logical elaboration has always been considered as an indispensable part of the growth of a man's experience. It is a fact that the mystical experience, as it was in one sense the finale of all experience, was in another sense subject to the rigorous critique of logic. The Hindu is a very old man who never had any illusion about dogma or creed in any sense of the terms.

What did the Hindu mean by the human species? What was his conception of the human society, which he took to be one vast organization covering every conceivable group of the human race? How did he deal with it in actual practice? Is it possible that one can deal with it exactly as one deals with the state, or a nation, or a race?

It would be stupid to suggest that one can form easily an idea of the human species or any species that has ever been known. There are technical issues

about the nature and origin of species which it would be senseless to raise in a treatise like this, especially as the conclusions of the scientific world seem still to be hanging in the air. The most that it would be sensible to attempt is a broad review, to get hold of the lines that demarcate one species from another. There, what is important to remember about the Hindu view on the question of the human species is that it had definitely implied two or three assumptions to account for the nature and origin of all species. We shall deal with the assumptions first:

1. One of the assumptions was that the species cannot exist by itself. It must, in other words, exist with an environment facing it. What is to be noted is that this environment behaves towards the human species just as another species. It will come into clash with it just as much as it will be in harmony with it. There is no such thing as the spontaneous evolution of a species; the whole of its activity, whatever form it may take, is by way of reaction to the species which must be either in clash, or in co-operation, with it. In literal truth they must be mutually behaving towards each other as antithesis and complement. It makes no difference whether we call this process evolution or give it any other name; the whole of its career will depend precisely on the nature of the relationship the two species bear to each other. There are conceivably many possibilities which this clash and co-operation may mean to

them, and it is as likely as not that they will alternate between definite stages represented by them with results diametrically opposite. The clash may lead to mutual extinction following a stage of utter confusion and *impasse*, and the co-operation which is bound to follow may end in the birth of a new species different from both.

The point that bears significantly on the issue we are discussing is that the life of every species is strictly and absolutely bound up with that of some other species, which serves it as antithesis or complement. To follow it or localize it or demarcate its habitat or region, we have to discover its contrary, and that is possibly the best way open to us. The moment we have discovered what species it is that stands in the relation of conflict or harmony with it, we have practically drawn a line round its boundary.

2. If the question is raised why its career and prospects should be so intimately mixed up with that of any other species, the answer is to be found in the nature of its origin. It is the peculiar way in which it comes into existence that determines this peculiarity in its nature. It so happens that the parent stock from which it springs differentiates into both of them at once. As far as we can judge, there seem to be at least two points to be noted about this differentiation: (*a*) that a species owes its existences to some other species, which means that it can neither claim spontaneous existence nor be due to

an act of some mysterious agency or power; (*b*) that the parent stock which gives birth to it has to give birth to its contrary and complementary as well—as if the birth of a species takes place along with its environment.

Let us take an example. No one need deny that in some sense or other the European is the parent stock to the differentiation of which the German, and the French, for instance, both owe their existence. Equally it cannot be denied that fascism and communism in their turn both imply "democratic liberalism" as their parent stock. Buddhism and Brahminism in Indian history equally presuppose Hinduism. To-day the Hindu and the Mohammedan can be traced to the Indian of the medieval period. These are all instances of differentiation; and one can easily multiply them from any historic or contemporary record.

It is not, however, implied that the terms "parent stock" and "birth" should be taken in their literal significance. On the contrary, when we are dealing with an entity or species we are not exactly dealing with what we call an individual, and exactly the birth of a species may in one sense be just as enigmatical as its very existence, though we cannot deny either. Only two things which are essential about it are sufficiently intelligible, and even observable in spite of its mystical personality: (*a*) we can always localize it; (*b*) we find it implies definitely a parent stock.

As we have suggested already, nobody can contradict the statement that the French and the German both belong to the European species as their parent stock. It would be as true to say that the German and the French both exist, and in a definite relationship, to testify to the fact that they belong to each other as antitheses and complements, as that the European species exists alongside of them. No German or Frenchman can help feeling and behaving like a European when he has to deal with the Asiatic or African, even though the German may stolidly refuse to swear allegiance to the League of Nations; so both parent stock and differentiationin to antithesis and complement seem to be perfectly intelligible notions, in spite of the fact that a laboratory account of them is still a matter of speculation.

If it is further asked why differentiation should take place at all and, if it does, why it should take that peculiar form and no other, that will be inviting a strictly philosophic discourse. What we have to take for granted in this treatise is that it is so, as a matter of fact, and that it may suggest hopes for a metaphysical explanation too in its proper place. This second assumption, which the position of the Hindu conception of the human species seems to imply, has to be kept in mind along with the first before we can truly follow its full claim about the social organization with the group as its unit.

Could we not divine at once how the Hindu would

try to locate the human species? Would it not be perfectly fair for him to assert that, so long as at least the animal species is there, we can never be in doubt about the existence of the human species in its purity or non-differentiated state? We have to remember that we are not discussing questions with any scientific aspirations; precision and nicety in detail, however valuable, is not exactly our present need. We want to be assured about the reality of the human species in a way which is sufficiently accurate for the purpose of laying the foundation of a social organization.

May we not argue on the basis of the existence of the animal species alone that the human species in its original, pure form must still be surviving? May we not expect to come across groups of individuals who are just barely human? Is it not a fact that we, however sophisticated, may actually feel and behave as human beings pure and simple when we have to deal with the animal world exclusively? There are heaps of cases on record, especially in the experience of men who had opportunity to live in close and constant touch with the animals in the forest world, which show conclusively the sudden and sustained behaviour of extremely sophisticated men as human, pure and simple.

The point to remember is that we shall not only find it easy to locate the human species so long as the animal species is there, but that we are likely to feel and behave ourselves at times like pure human

beings exactly as our ancestors in those prehistoric times did. Do we not undergo changes at times in our reactions even to our fellow members in the midst of civilized existence which could suit only our original ancestors in their cave surroundings?

Chapter VIII

The plot thickens, however, from the moment the virginal purity of human species has been located and guaranteed in the twentieth-century environment of civilized man. The contention arises at once that what counts is the whole series which begins for all practical purposes with that virginal form down to the most sophisticated or differentiated specimen hitherto known. The question of the human species is the question of the whole range of groups, and not of any one particular specimen. What is to be specially noted about them is that they somehow lie intimately connected and naturally imply some kind of order or system. It makes no difference whether they range from the most crude and extremely primitive down to the most intelligent and civilized. It is inconceivable that any one of them, however advanced or sophisticated, would stand on its own as an isolated or independent entity, as if it never had its origin directly from some parent stock which could but belong to that series or organization as a matter of course.

To the Hindu most decidedly the human species means all races, cultures and faiths, whatever their

origin and however placed. The most significant point to notice is that, in spite of the differences which made even contact between them impossible, they were held together by a common bond. It was this bond that formed the keynote of their whole existence. The fact is that each and every one of the human groups is nothing but a unique attempt to realize that bond, or unity, or central purpose as it is variously defined. Here we reach almost the fringe of scientific speculation and are very nearly within sight of the occult or the mysterious. Yet two definite claims may be made on behalf of this position:

1. Historically, all the groups arose out of a differentiation from the parent stock, directly or indirectly.

2. Logically they could not but be subject to some common purpose.

The contention of the Hindu that the human species must be considered as one vast organization practically stands on these two claims. The historical argument again is supported by two other suggestions:

1. The idea of the organic nature of all existent reality.

2. The idea of differentiation.

By the first idea, what was definitely excluded or ruled out was the isolated or independent existence of any species in the shape and form of an individual. If the species is to exist at all, it cannot possibly exist as something self-sufficient and complete. To

the Hindu the individual as bare individual never appealed apart from his relationships. He understood him, if at all, as only a member or constituent of a society or group, or organization. To him the essence of individuality lay in the unity which the multiple individuals constituting a group or society are bound to profess. If in spite of all that he did not quite succeed in getting rid of him altogether, his very last act was to give him the chance of absorption or immolation in the divine absolute as if that consummation would appease the most baffling of all aspirations, individuality or the surd or caprice of human experience.

Organized existence to the Hindu, therefore, is the only conceivable existence for anything real, and the human species cannot possibly plead that it is an exception to this rule. It is impossible that we should ever find the "wandering individual," the quest of the anthropologist, anywhere in this wide universe. Whatever the worth or value of this conviction, it is an open secret how it was intimately associated with perhaps the most astute speculative efforts ever made in the land of philosophy. We need not refer to the Indian or European thinkers who formulated and practised idealism. It is the idealistic argument really and truly that was at the bottom of the claim that the human species could exist only as an organization, which meant necessarily that it must have a common unity and purpose which was to hold the constituents together.

Yet why should the unity or the bond that held together the constituents of the original human stock survive in the later forms into which it is found to have changed or altered? What is it that makes the numerous differentiations that follow it inherit it as a legacy as if without it they could not survive? Here it is the second idea, the idea of differentiation, that comes to our rescue. It is just as well that we should again remind our readers that we are by no means suggesting these theories as the last word on the issues involved. These are but implications which appear to us to lie behind the Hindu view. We offer them with a conviction that, however broad and incomplete, they may meet at least the obvious issues that arise. Perhaps we have not altogether followed the idealistic bend.

To begin with we may suggest that the second idea may be considered both in its historical and logical aspects, and what is meant by the historical refers to the physical and physiological features involved in the differentiation. This is an obvious point, and perhaps without much exaggeration it could be claimed that structurally even the most sophisticated human group retains the form of its primitive ancestors. How much of biological significance attaches to it, and whether one could claim a continuity in the passage of some vital element peculiarly human in its composition, we would much rather not discuss. These are extremely technical issues and, as we cannot too often repeat, they are

beyond the scope of this book and our capacity. For our purpose it is enough if all the human groups could be found to possess some physiological structure common to them all. That would be evidence that they did not lose connection altogether with the original species, even on the physiological plane.

It is the logical form of the theory more than the physiological form that may be of greater worth and, broadly speaking, its main contribution may be put in three distinct propositions:

1. What we have called the parent stock of the original human species retains its individuality or integrity even after the process of differentiation has given birth to the new species in some form or other. If, for instance, we take the European as a parent stock, to which the French and the German stocks belong as the result of its differentiation, the appearance of the latter does not mean the extinction or disappearance of the former. Similarly, if we take the European and Asiatic as differentiation of the human species, the former does not imply that the human species has come to an end. Whatever the relationship between the parent stock and the species that result from its differentiation may be, the latter do not eliminate the former; nor is it a fact that their function overlaps that of the parent stock. The parent stock survives because it alone was capable of fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended, though the form of the survival may not be identical with its original form.

If, for instance, the European stock which is the parent stock, is followed by the French and the German stocks as its differentiated result, its function to deal with its antithesis or complement, the Asiatic or the African stock, does not pass over to the French and the German stock as such. They, as French and German, start their career with entirely new functions and are totally unsuited to the function of the parent stock. In other words, they cannot serve the parent stock pure and simple or step into its shoes. If it be a fact that the Asiatic and African stocks did not disappear as a matter of course with the appearance of the French and German stocks, the parent stock had to survive with its original function of dealing with its antithesis and complement. It will never do for us to forget that the parent stock was a species in its own turn and as such was bound to have its own antithesis and complement with which to deal.

If by any chance the French and German stocks seek to abolish the parent stock, if in other words they seek to make the French and German stocks prevail over the European stock altogether, the chances are that the western society where they all belonged would be liable to be overrun by Asiatic immigration. For in the absence of the pure European element in that society, there would be no agency left to stop, say, the Japanese flood or prevent the nemesis of recent European history.

It is inconceivable that the French and German stocks could prevail and function as anything but

French and German, and what that means we have noticed since at least the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The French and the German stocks, as a matter of fact, do not directly stand in relationship to the Asiatic and African. They do not clash with them, nor do they depend upon them for their sustenance as French and German. It is through their parent stock that they derive their sustenance for themselves, exactly as it is the parent stock alone which protects them from these innovations. The point of the first proposition, therefore, is that the parent stock and the species which result from its differentiation keep distinct and unique with their functions, which do not overlap nor cancel each other.

2. In whatever way the function of the parent stock and that of the creative species may preserve their distinctness and uniqueness, nevertheless it does not follow that they stand unrelated or unconnected. The second proposition is that the difference between them, instead of being a bar to their connection, implies a mutual dependence. By the nature of the differentiation, once the parent stock has undergone the process, it is supposed to have lost its original freedom, and it follows that nothing of the old organization or social order can survive. In its place another and a more expanded one will appear to which both the functions will belong equally and in a state of mutual implication. We shall try and illustrate this position. If we take it for

granted that there was a time when the European species existed by itself unembarrassed by the German or the French or the British, we could expect that the organization which embodied it did not include any of the existing European states. Its whole function must have consisted in dealing, let us say, with the Asiatics and Africans. By the time this European species had completely undergone a differentiation which produced the German, the French, or the British, for example, that European organization must have gradually been replaced by what we call the French, the British, the German, and the Italian states and nationalities. It would be impossible to find any trace of the strictly and purely European organization during the period the states and the nationalities finally took their shape. We are aware there are many issues connected with the nature of this process of differentiation, and incidentally we may remark that it is by no means a smooth and straightforward process. It involves on the contrary all that clash in history known as the clash between the old and the new, the conservative and the liberal, those who want to preserve the ancient or the established order and those who want to abolish it in favour of its extreme opposite. This is not the place to discuss the nature of the process; all that we are interested in is the nature and form the social order takes after these clashes have been superseded by some mutual constructive effort; and the point that we are emphasizing is that in this

new social order the function of the parent stock is preserved just as much as that of the species that resulted finally from the differentiation. They are preserved in a state of mutual dependence. We get obviously a new instance of the parent stock, but it is to be classified under the old form, while the other functions which are all new do not arise spontaneously in the new organization but must be traced to the old parent stock. They are so placed under the new dispensation that they are altogether effete and inoperative if they do not all get an equal chance of working out their mission. We shall again try and illustrate.

If the German and the French states, for instance, want to exercise their immediate function, they can do so if only the European feature or aspect of the German and French social order is working efficiently enough. If Germany or Italy wants to discard that European feature if, in other words, the German state concentrates on dealing with the French, oblivious of the fact that there is an Asiatic and African environment to deal with—the chances are that it will fail. Even if it succeeds in beating the French again or overrunning the whole of the French state, it is almost certain that it will be swept off by the Asiatic hurricane. On the other hand, if France makes a serious effort to concentrate the whole of the French state's energy on the European function she may make herself immune from the Asiatic blight, but there will be nothing left of her

as French on account of the German colonization that is sure to follow. The point is that once, as a result of the differentiation of the parent stock, the German and the French stocks have come into existence, nothing again can happen in the German or the French states which would not be in perfect tune with the German and the French. The European function could be exercised if only it took a line perfectly consistent with the German or the French function. What we have to remember is that after the differentiation no such thing or being as pure European would be left behind. All the individuals who constitute the new organization would be either German European or French European. So that any policy of Europeanism which did not directly satisfy the German need or aspiration was bound to be inoperative and useless. For it is not worth while serving a European policy or cause which takes no account of the German and the French. The success of the European policy therefore depends upon the possibility of the success of the German policy. This seems to us to be the truth which underlies Hitlerism which to-day sounds like a paradox in the European sky. This is the truth again which will explain the Brahmin's proud declaration that, so long as there was one Brahmin left in the wide world to offer worship to his deity, Hindus were safe.

3. The third proposition which arises out of the first two seems to be more complicated still; and the

question with which it deals is whether the state of mutual dependence of functions can be supposed to constitute an organization. If we find that the Germans, for instance, are not only functioning as imperialists and exploiters in Asia and Africa, but periodically fighting and making terms with the French in Europe, could we say that we have discovered in the double function the end or purpose which the individual German must be supposed to cherish? Is what is called the German state a society or organization which is known truly by a common end or purpose? Did, or could, such an end and purpose appear in the parent stock of the European family or even the human family? Could such bodies, large or small, be conceivably expected to hold it? That is the next question which the theory of differentiation distinctly implies. The answer of the Hindu is equally clearly that they do not. Nowhere do we come across, according to the Hindu, the organization which can be truly known by the end. All social orders and communities that we know of are but patterns of interdependent functions and groups which seek to realize some far-off distant end. That end, in other words, is not and cannot be found in the stuff history is made of. The organization that is held together by the unity of this end is another name for the universe. Human beings in their social, cultural or spiritual groups are but functioning nucle to realize its central end. The issue in the main that arises with them is not whether

any one of them is more valuable than another or higher and lower than another but how they all stand related as mutually essential to one another. Here is a system of functions which imply one another and guarantee and regulate one another's chances. The universe they constitute, the unity which holds them together is not to be identified with the system or at any one of the functions respectively. The human individual who has to play such an important role in the system has continually to remember that the central end or purpose is neither in the parent stock nor in the differentiated parts. He has to keep in mind that the bond which keeps them all interdependent is elsewhere and far away, and it should be then to realize that end by scrupulous care to fulfil his own special function and expecting respectfully that every other will be equally fulfilled. What becomes of special importance for him to remember is that his success will depend not merely on his own individual effort but on the effort of all; that unless the whole universe was being supported by the multitudinous number of groups and species his effort was of no avail. Conversely, he himself is as important and essential to that universe as any other group or individual conceivably may be.

Chapter IX

We are fully aware that very serious and complicated questions may arise with reference to the distinction that we have just made between the two definite conceptions:

1. The conception of the Universe, known by its central purpose, end or unity.

2. The conception of the system of functions, known by their attempt or activity to realize that end.

It will be difficult to dispose of the whole of human history, for instance, as nothing but an attempt or function which must necessarily imply some far-off, distant end. At any rate there are theorists who would refuse to go beyond the horizon which empirical, or scientific, research can hold up for our benefit. This is not the place at which we can enter into a metaphysical discourse. What we can incidentally observe is that mutual dependence of functions, if it has to be accepted as a fact, argues the absence of the uniting medium in the mutually implicated functions themselves. If, for instance, the European and the German functions, to go back to our old example, stand in a relation of mutual

dependence, neither of them can claim to be the determining agent of that implication. Their uniqueness is by no means a reason to guarantee to them any such claim. They do not and cannot stand in the relationship of ground and consequent, nor as cause and effect. They are on the contrary completely unique and distinct.

How then could they be sufficient in themselves for an explanation of their mutual dependence? By what conceivable act of self-immolation could they be supposed to have reduced themselves to that situation? The explanation points to some agency outside them which alone can assume the position of authority to both of them. Call it by whatever name you like, you have to assume it as vital to them if you choose not to alter your original position that they stood in a relation of mutual dependence. Whether we like it or not we have to take the whole range of our human experience, whether in racial, cultural, or spiritual modes as of only preparatory or instrumental significance. One can show, with at least some reason, that, whether as groups expanding from the parent stock to the differentiated types or strictly as functions like service, trade and industry, administration or spiritual service, they all stand in a relation of mutual implication. It is difficult to see how they could represent what is of value or the determining agency as well.

As a matter of fact, it is only such instances where distinct and unique centres of activity are found in

a relation of mutual dependence that give rise to the necessity of what is called the organic view. As far as we know, it has not been possible to account for such instances without the hypothesis of organism or some other hypothesis analogous to it. If what we have suggested so far about the relationship of the groups be at all true, it may be argued that perhaps the Hindu was not far out when he deliberately suggested the need and vision of the universe apart from the historic line of races, cultures and faiths, or more strictly the functions of the Brahmin Khatrya, Vaisya and Sudra. There was sufficient excuse for him to believe that the end of man is not bound up with the caste to which he belonged, and that nothing short of salvation, which meant absorption in the central unity of the universe to which all the groups belonged, could constitute that end. Nobody in his position, who happened to look at the relationship of the groups or functions from his angle and was struck by that mutual implication, could have sought for the value and worth in those groups and functions themselves. It would have been difficult to build up a social system without a direct reference to that unity or without emphasizing the necessity or uniqueness of all the groups and functions for the fulfilment of the central end.

What is by far the most important conclusion that follows from this line of approach is the necessity of emphasizing the purity and uniqueness of functions and groups as well as their implication with regard

to one another. For practical sociological purposes nothing could be more significant. If we have to build ourselves a society, we cannot build it in a manner which will ignore either the uniqueness or purity of the group or its indispensable service for other groups. What is called the caste restriction or barrier in the Hindu organization must have arisen from the perception of this fundamental truth. You can no more build society—if you want stability—without making the group the unit than you can help protecting it from interference or encroachment. Once a group, always a group. The question of its demise or disappearance must in the last analysis be left in the hands of the same law and forces as were responsible for its birth. Let nature and history decide when it must leave this stage. If it is to be superseded by some voluntary act, that act can come from a group that alone can effect its spoliation. In other words, the individual as individual cannot conceivably be conceded the right or opportunity to make or mar the group as it likes.

We can, according to the Hindu, abolish what is called the rigour of caste distinction only by undermining the possibility of group life. What that means, anyone who is at all familiar with European history ought to know. The experiment there was made with the individual as the unit, as we shall presently show. If it is not clear to-day how it failed to build up a stable society, we shall never be wise about the prospects of the human race. The issue is simple.

Stability of the human species is inconceivable if the purity of the group is not observed with scrupulous accuracy—or, to put it in another form, if the individual claims as such be not regarded as esoteric or impossible. If we want to appreciate the Hindu scheme or be hostile to it, we must not forget that the Hindu did not believe that the individual was the cornerstone of the universe, nor that the central unity could somehow be equated with the pretension of an individual, whatever its proportion or however it originated.

But let us hope we have now got at least some idea as to what the Hindu meant by choosing the group as the unit or in deliberately laying down the dictum that, if we expect security of stability in our social order, we have to build it with the group as the unit. This meant that we cannot afford either to select groups or to eliminate them, just as we cannot place them in a system of hierarchy. We have to include all claims as represented by the groups that are there, and consider them all as equally essential to one another. The relationship of them should be measured in terms of interdependence, and not value. The question of valuation falls outside the system, as the central end or the final purpose which was the only determining agent of it, falls altogether outside the historic scheme. As such, its practical bearing on that scheme is bound to take the shape more of the speculative, esoteric and mystical. The man and woman in their place in society, while

doing their part there, will keep in touch with that end. The supernatural and the mystical, in other words, will have to be sought definitely just as it would be necessary to deal with the natural or the empirical. There must be both kinds of effort on the part of the human individual, and naturally, to the Hindu, social and historic life goes hand in hand with the supernatural and the spiritual. What the full significance of this claim is, it is impossible to delineate in such a treatise as this. We should be more than satisfied if we succeeded in showing how to the Hindu the human species flowed like a continuous stream and never split into watertight sections; how the races, cultures and faiths all belonged as constituent functions of the same universe, and for the fulfilment of the same central aim; and, finally, how it is necessary, while we are dealing with the human species, not to reject or discard any human claim. We do so at our own peril if we do it at all.

Chapter X

The only issue that remains to be considered now is whether a social experiment frankly based on the group as its unit and on the coherence of the human species as its primal faith, would blend and fuse with another system where the unit was equally frankly its direct opposite, namely, the individual, and which consequently had to choose selection and elimination as its method. Could we normally expect that a social order built on the absolute and the central unity of the universe as the only essential goal of the individual's life, and which made provision within its scope for races, cultures and faiths irrespective of creed, colour and efficiency, be compatible with an honest and straightforward individualism? Is it not inevitable, on the contrary, that a serious and almost fatal clash would result if they were brought together in spite of obvious and utter incompatibility? Yet nothing less serious than this was attempted when landlordism was introduced into the Indian social scheme in the shape of "permanent settlement" in Bengal and its variants in other parts of India; and, as was only natural, what followed in the course of nearly a century was un-

mitigated disaster and unspeakable misfortune. The Indian social order gradually lost its prestige, credit and cohesion; and what that meant to the Indian community for generations together need not be stressed in a treatise like this. It would not be at all true to suggest however that the British community which happened to be responsible for this disaster escaped altogether unhurt or unharmed. What credit or prestige was still left to the British experiment after nearly a century is not a matter for rejoicing, either in the Indian or the European home. What sheer economic strength and mechanized power, which is all that is left of it now, can mean without its root in credit or prestige, even a child of the twentieth century knows better than the ancestors of the human race. The fact is that the damage to both sides has been considerable; and those who do distinguish between the economic and non-economic assets of the human race would certainly consider the European's loss as equally disastrous.

Yet it need not be difficult to see how landlordism was bound to mean the introduction of individualism, the direct opposite of the Hindu scheme, into India. The very mode in which it was instituted would make it clear. If we just remember how the landlords were created and what exactly were the immediate conditions which were responsible for their creation, we shall see how it meant in principle the same thing as individualism. The British government of the day was in perpetual need of money for various reasons;

and some kind of consolidation of the British rule was long overdue. The revenue had to be made secure and steady, and the market where the chief interests of the British experiment lay had to be brought under strict control as soon as possible. The order in the country which had survived after the break up of the Mogul rule could not be relied upon for more than one reason. It was well-nigh beyond the capacity of the British mind to acquaint itself with the ramifications of the social system that prevailed in the country in spite of the apparent disorder. Besides, the amount and kind of power and authority they exercised was by no means proportionate to the task they had undertaken. It was a matter of touch and go whether the British experiment would succeed or fail considering the enormity of the problems and the distance between the main source of its power and strength and the land where it had started its experiment. It became necessary and inevitable under the circumstances that a sympathetic and friendly atmosphere should be created in the country at any cost; and what could guarantee the success of such an undertaking more than the creation of a "new caste" with its outlook and interest identified with that of the British experiment? It was exactly the mode and method in which this "middle class" was created that introduced individualism to the Indian system. What happened was that a certain class of people were selected out of the diverse castes in the Indian society to be made

landlords or owners of the land in the village. This class was known for the part they played in the trade, commerce and industry of the country more than the others. The selection was made on the ground that they were the people who could be depended upon for securing the revenue and controlling the market. The whole procedure on the face of it looked absolutely simple, straightforward and naïve. It would be almost unfair to the representatives of the British people in India in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries to suggest that they were any more shrewd or diabolic in their temperament than economic enterprise, due to accidental conditions, would make them. The fact is they had to go out in search of trade and commerce exactly as their ancestors in the north had for long centuries in the past gone out in search of treasures and booty. It made no difference whether the seas became less or more rough or if they themselves had more or less goods to sell or, finally, had more or less needs than what their island home could meet. What sent them out into the wide world unmindful of the rough and tumultuous seas, or any other obstacle which Nature in her wise provision could put in their way, was their inborn spirit and temperament. It was the deep-lying Viking blood which inspired them; it was the lure of the south to the north which drew them on, and finally it was the spirit of adventure and enterprise at enormous cost and of spectacular brilliance. No historian would miss this side of the experiment

and there can be no excuse for attaching any extra motive to it. It was meant to secure revenue and control the market, and perhaps nothing else; they had to steady both as there was no other way out. Once they were there as a result of the deep urge of their ancestral temperament, they had to see through what they had been led to undertake.

This naïve experiment once accomplished, led by some cruel irony to the establishment of two fatal things in the social economy of India:

1. The theory and practice of ownership and the principle of individualism that it implied.

2. The theory and practice of capitalism and the valuation of economical good as the paramount value that it implied.

What happened under these innovations immediately was that all land, the main source of sustenance to the people at large, was transferred from the juristic or legal ownership of the village community to the absolute proprietorship of individual members of the village. They ceased at once to be the communal property of the people at large and became the personal property of individual members who could deal with them as they liked and dispose of them as it suited their purpose. What did this really mean? Not that the village as village went out of existence, and the people were sent out into the wilderness to eke out their existence as best they could. The change that was brought about was very simple in its outline. Instead of the village com-

munity with its central code, which laid down the principle and practice of the distribution of the produce of the land, it was the individual proprietor's sweet will that was entrusted to deal with the produce. Henceforth the main question was not what the community's need was and how it should be met; the question was what form of distribution would be in line with the chief interest of the owner or proprietor. The interest to be served first and foremost was not the interest of the people at large, but that of the landlord or the owner, which meant in the last analysis the British people. After all, the landlord was but an agent of the British government, and did his bidding with authority and power that was delegated to him for that purpose. Yet what again did this change in the method of distribution truly mean? It did not necessarily mean that the individual owners were bound to act against the principle and practice of the code right away, or that their interests were bound in the nature of things to be antagonistic to the interests of the village community. The fact, on the contrary, must have been that for a considerable time, the traditional practice could not be done away with altogether. It is one thing to hold a *de jure* right, quite another to exercise it to the full. History is full of records where individuals with absolute power, and full right, came to immolate themselves on the altar of the public good. The landlords who came to own their new right of ownership as a gift from the British

rulers were, after all, Indians who had been used to a certain form and type of distribution for ages immemorial. Their habits and instincts, if nothing else, would prevent them from following a course or policy which was hostile to the code. In the nature of things they could not afford to antagonize the whole people. The real authorities, the British, who were directly and wholly responsible for this innovation, came from a civilized stock and understood what rule without the consent of the people would possibly mean. They were not the people to try an experiment unmindful of the ingrained habits and instincts of the Indians, especially as they inherited at least some of the true Christian merits and virtues which did not encourage the economic exploitation of the human race. There was at least some safeguard for the rights and privileges of the people at large so far as the civilized sense of the British people and the ingrained habits and instincts of the landowners could be depended upon. But, by a tragic destiny, ownership is a heady wine. It acts powerfully and incessantly on the balance of the human mind. All the ethics of the world that ever descended, either from the sense of prudence, propriety or humanity, or was directly derived from some revealed source or authority, could not cope with its careering madness. Neither the civilized sense of the British people nor the ingrained habits of the Indians could prevent a disintegration of the code which aimed at more than an equitable distribution in the Indian village.

Once the principle of communal ownership was abandoned, the practice that followed from it in the shape of a co-operative system of services and functions gradually disappeared. In course of time there was no agency left in the village which would seriously, and in a responsible manner, consider the question of the interests of the village or the people at large. The village as village or the interest, or peace, of the community as such ceased to exist. What prevailed in their place was the will and interest of a trading community whose chief design lay outside the country, and that of the landholding class who had risen as the backbone of the British rule in India. The village and the people no doubt continued to function, but only to the extent these two interests permitted, or as far as the innate strength of the old tradition guaranteed. Here was a severe clash of interests between what may be called personal property built on the claim of individualism, and the communal system of social existence built on public and private property. The Indian system never developed, as we have already pointed out, the conception of personal property with regard to the major economic values. It did not and could not, precisely because it chose the group as the unit and discarded the claim of the individual as such. The only sense in which it came to understand property was public and private. There was the village land, the produce from which was utilized for the sake of the communal interest. The people of

the village as a whole had a right to it for their maintenance. There was the land which belonged to private families, and the produce of this land went to maintain the special needs of the family. In neither case was ownership contemplated, as in both cases it was the corporate interest alone that was kept in view. In the case of the village land the interests of the whole village were under consideration, while in the case of the family land the whole family had a right to its enjoyment. No member of the family happened to be its owner and no condition was set to the enjoyment of it except that he or she must be a cognate or agnate of the family. The principle followed included among other things—insurance against unemployment, old age, and economic distress—and perhaps it can be suggested that the distinction between public and private property was introduced on the ground that groups may have their own individuality which required special opportunities to express itself. While the individual as individual was discarded, the uniqueness of the group as such was recognized. Finally, private property did not clash with the communal interests or public good, but came on the top of it to guarantee the maximum of production for the community by an incentive to private activity.

If the creation of personal property in the place of public and private property introduced the principle of individualism by the back door into India, the technique of its introduction was responsible for the

creation of another European institution, namely, capitalism. The landlords, we have seen, were chosen from the moneyed class, and the obvious reason was that they alone were in a position to safeguard both the revenue and the market. Incidentally it meant at once that henceforth it was the moneyed caste who would rule supreme; and the fact was that all the other castes were automatically reduced to a subordinate position. The case was not merely one of making one caste supreme where all the castes were in a state of interdependence—that would be individualism pure and simple; it was one of making a particular caste, that is to say the moneyed caste, supreme. Yet Warren Hastings, impressed by the value and importance of the Bhagavat Gita, said that it "will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance."

It is a very curious thing that while we often get reports of individual Englishmen appreciating the merit and worth of Indian culture, we do not find any serious attempt ever made to suit the British administrative policy to the spirit and technique of the Indian social system except on one occasion, namely, the Queen's proclamation. Unfortunately this royal note of true statesmanship, perhaps inspired by an Oriental mind, was soon lost in the din of the imperial march that followed. Neither Queen Victoria nor Disraeli could guarantee the fulfilment

of the promises that the proclamation so profoundly offered for the preservation of the faiths, cultures and customs of the Indian people. It is still a problem to the serious student of history whether this mischief followed from some deep-lying nemesis in the heart of Indian history, or the age-long prejudice against the Indian civilization which Europe since the Greek period has been so steadily cultivating. There can be no doubt that once the moneyed caste was made supreme in Indian society a standard of life came to be automatically set which submerged all other values and gradually led to a complete disintegration of Indian morality. Nothing could be more fatal to a people or culture which deliberately set its store by the non-economic or the spiritual, and never forgot to preach and practice day in and day out for hundreds of centuries how the values that really counted did not belong to this world. It was a stab in the back of the theory and practice that this life was but a life of preparation and all that we ever achieved here and now was but an aid and help to reach our spiritual goal. What terrific results did or could follow from this change it is difficult to describe. The whole country was not only brought to the verge of ruin and economic distress by the dislocation of its industry, commerce and agricultural system; its moral backbone was sought to be broken in twain. Not only did the old corporate virtues, mutual services, fellow-feeling and goodwill gradually cease to function, but sooner or later mutual distrust,

antipathy and suspicion appeared in their place. It is neither here nor there to ask whether such a widespread misfortune could have been avoided if only the Brahmins and Khatryas were chosen as the landlords in the place of the Vaisyas and Sudras. At best they would have utilized their political and economic power in a different way on account of their hereditary training in administration and higher culture. They would have equally failed to administer or rule in the interests of the people of the village, precisely because such a rule was not possible outside the economy of the village community. It would be as incorrect to say that as castes the Vaisyas and the Sudras were less honest and efficient than the Brahmins or the Khatryas as to suggest that the Brahmins and Khatryas would preserve their balance and equanimity under all circumstances. The real point was the system under which they had to work. If they had to work for the public good under a system governed by ownership and individualism, they could not have achieved their purpose even if divine chances had fallen like manna on their heads.

Chapter XI

But a very interesting issue may be raised here on behalf of the individualist, namely:

"Assuming that all that we have said about the clash between castes and individualism be true, does it follow that on the whole it meant necessarily decay and ruin for Indian civilization rather than progress and advancement? If we can find reasons to believe that it was for the future good of India if not for her continued happiness, would it be too much to argue that in the nature of things she has to pay for an escape from her barbarous past? What would not any race or people pay for coming out into the fresh and pure light of civilization? How could any people escape the hard discipline and severe strain which the dark passage from the cave of barbarism inevitably brings?"

Some such question is at the back of the mind of every European of the twentieth century who still seriously holds that imperialism meant, and did, good to Asia and Africa. This is the only logical way to go about the defence of the British experiment. It argues an undying faith in individualism as the latest stage of human evolution; and no European

need be ashamed of the modern European history of exploitation or colonization in the East if he could manage to preserve his regard for this undying faith. There are signs to-day in the European horizon which seem to indicate a weakening in its strength; and even numbers of individual Europeans whether in Western Europe or the States seem to be almost convinced that individualism has not only proved a failure in European history but practically brought her to the verge of bankruptcy. These serious minds seem to be feeling that if the European imperialist, whether in the Christian church or the national parliament, does not abandon this faith and seek light from the East again, there will soon be nothing left of the European family or the European civilization. Besides, it is patent and obvious to anyone, however detached, that the European mind at the roots of its being was greatly perturbed by the manner in which European competition in political and economic affairs suddenly turned into an ideological clash as soon as the Great War with its immediate consequences finally came to an end. This clash if nothing else is a sure sign that the European mind has lost its undying faith in individualism; that it is tired of periodic warfare and constant diplomatic efforts to outwit one's opponent. The Machiavellian game, and its substitute in the modern age known as propaganda, seem to be no longer satisfying. On the contrary the European mind is obviously in search of the stable values and

the atmosphere where honesty, straightforwardness and goodwill prevail. Perhaps there is a call from the spiritual heights, an ache in the heart that it has travelled far from those lights which mean deep peace, unspeakable beauty and a joy which only a sense of the whole universe can bring. At any rate it is difficult to believe that Fascism and Communism will settle down in peace before they have come to some conclusion which is different from democratic liberalism, the last stage of individualism in Europe. Either there will be a colossal fight which might produce the dark age in Europe again, or there will be a new dispensation which will rebuild Europe.

To raise a defence of the British experiment in India on the basis of individualism at this late hour may not be altogether sound, sensible or intelligent; and one may even argue that the issue to-day is not whether the British people and the parliament were justified in disturbing the social order of India in the name of individualism, but whether there is enough of that order still left to serve the European in these days of incalculable calamity. The general in the army, the archbishop in the church and the professor in the university may still try and seek consolation from the immense organized strength which Europe still possesses. We may be regaled at times with declamations from the old veterans all over the European continent about the might and the potentiality of the European civilization, as if

the world is still standing where it did when Asia, to her infinite sorrow, lay at the feet of Europe. The real issue is not there: we mean in the parliamentary speeches or pulpit sermons or on the parade ground. It is at the heart of every European, which is beating fast with the constant sense of impending danger and an uncertainty that may spell disaster for any race; and keeping that fact in view we will just try and give a brief analysis of the meaning of individualism as it appears to us. We are not propagandists; we are humble students interested in the future of our race. It does not suit us to give praise where it is not due or withhold it from those who deserve it. The world has grown much too old for child's play; we cannot and ought not to deceive ourselves a moment too long if we can help it. Let us try and see if individualism alone is capable of yielding us the fruit of a stable social order and a release from the agony of periodic warfare.

By far the best way to see it is to note carefully that the unit of the social scheme that is based on individualism is the individual as such, exactly as the group was the unit in its rival scheme. Here is the crucial point of the whole system, as the group formed the crucial point of the other system. One may truly wonder why the two systems emphasized the value of either the individual or the group when as a matter of fact both of them happened to be indispensable as constituents of any social scheme. No sociologist would for a moment try to define

society or a social scheme without including both of them as its essential features. Yet no philosopher, unless he is overweighted with a partisan faith, would try to give a consistent account of them: an account, that is, which might find a common home for them. In other words they still seem to be behaving as incompatibles, and could not be reconciled in spite of centuries of speculative effort. Besides there has been so much of dark history which arose in the course of deciding about their respective merits, and the total achievement does not seem to have exceeded the limits of either compromise or confusion, both of which fail to minister to the real needs of the human soul. We do not propose to delineate the features of this confusion or compromise in this pseudo-historical treatise, but there is no reason why we should not add that practical life or social schemes could not be expected to touch the ground where the speculative efforts could not. In the economy of the universe one, and only one, standard of truth and justice prevails. The practical and the speculative are expected to stand or fall together, which in technical language means that they must belong to the same continuous system. The two social schemes that we are discussing, therefore, had to follow in the wake of the speculative achievements, and naturally they had either to emphasize the value of the individual or the group in their main or central outline; or run into compromises whenever it suited their convenience to do so.

But what exactly is meant by the statement that the individual is the unit of the European scheme? It means that the European social scheme is expected to preserve the individual above everything else exactly as the Hindu social scheme is expected to preserve the group. The preservation of the individual, again, means the preservation of his sense of uniqueness and freedom. The meaning of individuality, we cannot too often repeat, lies in its uniqueness and complete freedom. It excludes definitely and positively the claim of relationship or relatedness to interfere with its integrity which technically can be described as the non-related and the uncategorized. One way of describing it is to call it its own instance. If we want to give it metaphysical proportions and constitute the Real with individuality alone, we will have to exclude the universal altogether and reduce the whole universe to the proportion or status of the individual. Even if we do not lay stress on these metaphysical implications, for a sociological and practical purpose at any rate we cannot get rid of the sense of uniqueness and freedom that attaches to individuality. The individual must cherish it as his ideal goal if he is to preserve his integrity as individual; on the other hand the social scheme with the individual as its unit can have no meaning unless it makes preservation of his uniqueness and freedom its sole objective.

It follows, in consequence, that the whole social

scheme which is constituted by relationships among individuals becomes a sort of medium or arrangement to secure or guarantee the individual's need. The individual has to enter into it as a matter of course as the only way of safeguarding his freedom. There is no other alternative to him, as his individuality is subject to limitations of all kinds. The paradox is that the individual is not free, though he values nothing so much as his freedom; and the situation which the social scheme puts him into creates a sort of dual existence for him. He lives as a master of the society, but never truly lives in it. The whole of his social relationship is almost a means or medium of realizing his free life. As the Hindu, for instance, never feels that he is truly living while he is going through his social existence as a preparation for his real life of spirit, so the European also never forgets that only after he has served as a true and active member of his society could he expect to live truly as a free individual.

It is this experience of his life more than anything else that counts for him as truly valuable, and as an evidence of this we may refer to the European mode of living in a family. If the scope and structure of the family in Europe does not generally make a provision for a larger membership than the children with the strict condition that the children should go out as soon as they were able to look after themselves—one is reminded of the birds training their young to catch the worms—the explanation would be found

in its individualistic origin. If by a time-honoured custom the parents have to finish their long old age without the companionship of their children, even that would not mean any unusual hardship or misfortune. Even when the home was full of cheerful laughter and a warm embrace of companionship, it did not quite take the place of the life of cool freedom and unique living which the individualist took as the be-all and end-all of his existence. Precisely because he valued personal freedom above everything else· he could stand cheerfully the loneliness of extreme old age. It seems there still remains a barrier between individuals in the European society even in relationships which reach the most intimate level conceivable. It would be quite an interesting study for the sociologist to compare the actual scheme and technique of family life and personal relationships which the East and the West have developed. It may be discovered that while relationships were clearly valued on their own in the East, they seemed to be valued for their utility in the West. The question of comparison does not really arise as they are altogether different valuations. Perhaps the West came to know the meaning and value of relationships not as a matter of course, but by the need of judgment and compromise. In any case they knew what freedom of the individual meant much better, and valued it above everything else.

After this it should not be at all strange if the European and the Hindu are found to take altogether

different views about agreements and disagreements which form the staple need of all relationships. We shall begin with an account of the Hindu view. It seems to be obvious how the agreements to the Hindu appear to be central and fundamental. The reason is that he looked upon the preservation of the group or the recognition of its uniqueness or purity as the chief objective of all social order. The agreements or unities are nothing but the essence of the groups on a large or small scale. If we want to preserve the groups at any cost, we shall have to concentrate on agreements or the unities. Automatically the disagreements would fall to a subordinate place and may be regarded as nothing but accidents which do not bear directly on the main purpose of the social scheme. In no case could they be supposed to supersede the agreements, or be given the same weight or status in the social order. Perhaps the tendency of Hindu history lay in considering them as obstacles in the path of fulfilment, as if their function was to delay or postpone the fulfilment. If they stood there, sometimes occupying the whole stage, they did so if only to realize what the metaphysician calls the dues of the negative with exactly the same right to existence as that of pretence or illusion.

Yet one of the most curious features of the history of the Hindus was that the major portion of it was wasted on dealing with this most elusive pretence. Perhaps no other people in the past kept so close to the central unity of the universe, and yet no other

people had occasion to be so acutely conscious of deviations from it. The brunt of attack fell on the Hindu's social experiment from all sides and for longer centuries than on any other experiment. Nobody knew better than the Hindu how disagreements of faiths, cultures and races did or could create an extreme agony of the spirit. Equally evident is it that, unlike any other race or people, the Hindus' total resistance to this surd or enigma of life did not on the whole seek to emulate the spirit of violence in any shape or form but developed instead the technique of sacrifice, restraint and endurance. What this technique really means is a long story to tell. We have only to mention that it is the other pole of what is known as the technique of violence, whether it is expressed in open warfare or subdued preparation for it. Its main point is to emphasize the truth that differences and disagreements are neither ends in themselves nor instruments to realize ends. If we have to encounter them, we can only seek humility in their presence and put ourselves voluntarily to the grind of sacrifice, so that the dross that accumulated in our habits in spite of ourselves and gave rise to them might be washed away. The Hindu's method of dealing with the disagreements, if properly understood, implies a confession of weakness or feebleness in the human make-up, something in the human mind which warps its judgment and creates the same atmosphere which epidemics bring. It is the misfortune, pure and simple, of the human

home and, if anything, calls for a sustained and combined effort to remove it. If on the contrary we were to take advantage of a disagreement as the occasion for deciding rights and wrongs, and tracing justice or injustice to their sources, we could not commit a worse mistake. The Hindu, if he is true to his faith, would bleed to death when disagreements menaced the peace and order of the human home rather than take his adversary's life to realize his own ambition. If it is not possible for him to accept his rival's judgment or to give up his own judgment, it is not necessary that he should either assert his own or cut short his rival's claim by the use of force. Like a child he faces the descent of the blight of disagreement on human existence; he fails to see any point in it, and yet he is convinced something must have gone wrong somewhere. Disagreements to him are enigmas at best, and the sooner the human race were to take them as such, the better would be the chance for a combined effort to uproot their causes.

His constructive effort in consequence turns wholly on the agreements that alternate with the disagreements. We find him developing the social order, the keynote of which was co-operative effort. The village community, the joint family and the caste are all patterned on this one principle: the principle of unity or agreement that held the community of castes as one compact body. Throughout the scheme what is aimed at is preservation of all existing groups, the maximum of effort to produce opportunities for

satisfaction of the needs of the whole community, and offering the individual a chance to attain salvation.

Still the real issue is not whether the Hindu was aware of the disagreeable and painful fact of disagreements, or their distinction from the agreements which seemed to him to be the only positive feature of human existence. The real issue is whether he made a different valuation of them. Did it appear to him that it was the agreements that really counted while the disagreements were just a waste which sheer caprice or some evil destiny wantonly created? Did he or did he not, in other words, reckon with the disagreements as inevitable or indispensable features of human life? The answer is that he did.

There is his peculiar technique of dealing with it as a piece of evidence, to show how very seriously he took the negative and all the ills that flow from it. But the real evidence is to be found in the fact that he either made equal valuation of them, or did not raise the question of valuation with the agreements or disagreements at all. The truth is that to the Hindu neither the positive nor the negative phase of human existence could be counted as valuable or significant for their own sake. Neither the life of construction and fulfilment on the one hand, nor the life of frustration and discord on the other, constituted the ultimate goal or real value for human existence. They were but stages, preliminary or preparatory experiences that the human mind had got to go through before the final goal was reached.

In the nature of things permanence does not attach to either of them, and the only objective of permanent existence is to be found in the ultimate fact of experience, which is absorption in the divine absolute. Agreements and disagreements remain as but inevitable stages of preparation; we can no more avoid or escape the disagreements than we can build upon the agreements as if they are final and permanent.

Perhaps it will not be a mistake to add that the Hindu did not prefer the life of fulfilment and construction to the life of discipline and frustration. Both while he was building up the village economy with the three institutions, caste, joint family and village community, or honestly and manfully meeting the situation of disintegration and chaos with the spirit of sacrifice, compromise and endurance, he was equally convinced that he was preparing himself for the final goal. To emphasize the moment of hard discipline did not fill him with despair any more than the moment of achievement filled him with joy or ecstasy. He was, if he behaved like a true Hindu, expected to be indifferent to either joy or sorrow, to preserve calm, balance and steadiness in the face of both. The Hindu ascetic is the perfection of that ideal, and every man or woman as they go through life is expected to keep that ideal in mind and achieve it in whatever situation he may be placed.

Naturally, in so far as the Hindu came to make equal valuation of both agreements and disagree-

ments, and looked upon them in the last analysis as but stages of necessary preparation, the question of equality or inequality never arose seriously at any point in his social scheme. The political and the economic interest as such never came to form the chief end or the absolute value. Authority, power and control were looked upon as severe disciplines or duties rather than as privileges or rights. The man in power or with authority was liable to worse and harder punishment if he failed than the man who was not. It required a stricter and more arduous life to fill a position of authority than a subordinate position. The distinction between authority and subordination was one of quality or peculiarity rather than privilege. These distinctions created variety rather than hierarchy, so that the problem never was one of equalization but systematization. The view that was taken was objective; philosophical and scientific, to put it in modern phraseology. As the functions and services varied, so the capacities proportionate to them varied also.

The question of uniformity or standardization naturally did not arise, and what was found to be indispensable in its place was systematization, co-operation or harmonization. If anything served as the standard, it was the central unity or the common agreement or the absolute claim of the group. It made no difference whether a man belonged to the caste of the Brahmins or Sudras so far as the claim to salvation was concerned. God was not the mono-

poly or trust of any caste, empire or race, and to reach salvation, or to attain the fulfilment of life, the preparation that we have referred to was the only condition precedent that was set. The right to it was considered to be the birthright of every human soul, wherever and however born; and he or she was entitled to perfect enjoyment of this right through his or her own individual exertion in the group where he or she belonged.

Chapter XII

If now we turn to the European view, it would appear to be the reverse and the direct opposite of the Hindu. To get at its inwardness we should begin our account of it with a very broad description of the social structure which the European built up in the course of centuries, and it might be worth our while to keep in mind the salient features of the Hindu order. The Hindu order is definitely all-inclusive, as we must have seen already. Nothing is more obvious about it than the inclusion of every conceivable group within its pale or range. Races, cultures, faiths in all their diversities found a place in it. We find in it, for instance, monogamous groups living side by side with polygamous and celibate groups. Groups worshipping the absolute are found in close proximity to groups worshipping personal gods, ancestors, idols, and sticks and stones.

As we said, it is the direct opposite of the Hindu all-inclusiveness that marks the essential feature of the European form. It is exclusive in its scope and range and constituted by selective groups only. An instance of European social order is either celibate or polygamous or monogamous. We shall not find

the polygamous and monogamous groups living together in the European social order with the consent of public opinion or the sanction of the legislature. The European social order is again either German or French or British, but never German, French and British all together. The deviations or contradictions appear only in practice, unknown to the legislature.

The question of importance then is what there is in individualism or universalism which can account for such extreme differences in the social structures which the Hindu and the European profess. We shall begin with individualism. The chief thing to note is the identity or constitution of the individual or the implications of individuality. The individual, as we have seen, cannot submit to any external authority or to the control of what is called the common good or the general will. The individual is in itself a principle or energy or will which is self-sufficient and absolute, and is necessarily the final authority and ultimate court of appeal in all decisions whatsoever. It almost seems as if the individual centre exhausts the potentiality of the universe. To it, the historic and the immediate is the seat of all life and activity, so that the ultimate resides in its generative power and all order and arrangement comes and goes like gossamer by the dictate or mandate of its will. Nothing counts finally except the free will of the individual. So it follows that the individual by its nature is exclusive, dogmatic and absolute. In so

far as it claims to be here and now, it is absolute and self-sufficient. In so far as it is the one determining agent, it is bound to be dogmatic with a claim to free will.

In so far as it excludes relationship and claims crystal purity and uniqueness, it is the surd and the immaculately exclusive. It is difficult therefore to conceive how it could at all enter into any relationship. If it is the fact that it belongs nevertheless to a social order, that portion of its career must be the result of compromise, being but an arrangement that was rendered necessary by the exigencies of the universe where it belonged. Here is a claim to absoluteness which the universe or fate chooses not to recognize in its fulness. What follows in consequence is that the social order, which the individual as such has to form or enter into, takes a peculiar form. It comes to be constituted by what may be called similars as distinguished from the dissimilars. A distinction is made clearly and absolutely between similars and dissimilars, and two orders or schemes instead of one simultaneously rise out of them. If the individual, for instance, happens to be polygamous, the society that he chooses for himself includes only the polygamous people. The monogamous people, who are the dissimilars, do not find a place in that society, but find it necessary to form a separate society. There are two very important points in connection with the idea of the similars and dissimilars that ought to be noted:—

1. If the individual cannot be equated with the universal by any chance, we can think of a series which is constituted by instances of the same individual. These instances do not imply or refer to a class. They form only a series. For instance, any individual, like Lindsay or Nehru, can be described in terms of his childhood, adolescence and old age, or we may deal with him in his different moods, phases and features. The point is that each one of these phases or moods will represent the same identical Lindsay or Nehru, though each and every phase is different from each and every other. If we take, again, instances or types of polygamous people, they will be found to be all different, though it is a fact that they will be regarded as all cases of the same polygamous personality. There are difficulties about this way of describing or interpreting the personality or individuality of Lindsay or Nehru or a polygamous person, but it is sufficiently definite and may for sociological purposes be utilized. Besides, the fact is that all social systems which are built with the individual as the unit somehow or other imply the serial view of individuality, which to us is just as good or bad as that the metaphysicians call by the name of concrete universal. There is a choice between taking the individual as strictly unique and indivisible and taking him as a series of similars.

2. The other point is that similars do not appear except in the environment of dissimilars. Whether we like it or not we cannot get the polygamous people

without the monogamous people standing in a definite relationship to them. Nor, again, can we get cases where the worship of the absolute takes place without cases where that of the personal god takes place. By a peculiar law of the universe, nothing can appear or exist without its contrary equally existing and in a relation of opposition to it, so that if it is necessary for the individualistic society to build on the similars, it follows that there must be at least two social orders instead of one, dealing with the similars and the dissimilars, and in a state of opposition or competition.

Conclusions follow from these two points which seem to throw a good deal of light on more than one feature of European society. We see clearly how and why European society never can appear as one organization like that of the Hindu, with diverse races, faiths and cultures as its constituents, but must appear only as an organization which is constituted by races, cultures and faiths which are similar. For instance, the main groups of the European society—the British, the French, the German, or the Italian—all profess Christianity or variations of that faith. It would be a mistake to suggest that the German and the British cheerfully make room for the Mohammedan and the Buddhist faiths within their social organization as they do for the various denominations of Christianity. There has been no doubt a change in the attitude of the Englishman and the German toward the Mohammedan and the

Buddhist since the Middle Ages. Even mosques and Buddhist Biharas can be built in England in the neighbourhood of the church in the twentieth century, but the change does not really imply the equal acceptance by the European mind of the truth of all religions, so much as the subordination of the spiritual claim as such to the secular. In so far as the economic and the political interests form the standard or paramount value in modern European life, the non-Christian faiths as a matter of course get the chance of inhabiting western European soil in the company of extremely non-spiritual beliefs and convictions. The point is that the European at the moment is ultra-economic and pompously scientific. He can afford to be tolerant to spiritual claims. All his intolerance in the twentieth century is wasted on the non-European economies, political institutions and racial peculiarities.

It is equally true that, when questions of races and cultures arise, the different groups of the European people try as much as possible to keep to their separate racial or cultural peculiarities. The Nordic people frankly complain that they find it impossible to live with the Latins. The Slavs form a group of their own, while the Germans have just started talking about a new Germanic race. So if there is a sense in talking about such a thing as the European family, it does not imply that we have any instance of it in which all the European races, states, and cultures live together under the same political or economic

conditions except in the case of Switzerland. The fact is that we do not generally get a society which is constituted by the British, the French, the German or the Italian groups altogether, unless we go to the hinterland of Asia and Africa. We get instead different societies which are constituted by the different races: the British, the German, the French and the Italian. If by any chance the European could appreciate or cultivate the true Indian spirit or technique of social life, the British, the German, the French, or the Italian would have succeeded in forming one family or state or community instead of sombrely setting up a League of Nations to do service for that. The League is neither European nor constitutive of all the human groups. A real European organization cannot include the non-European nationalities, while a truly universal human organization is bound to be Hindu in its structure, for it must be all-inclusive, culturally, racially and politically.

Still there is a sense in which the European family or organization exists, and that sense refers to the parent stock from which the European race has descended as a result of differentiation. As we have already suggested, that parent stock is still there and comes into operation as soon as the antithesis to the European race, say the Asiatic race, creates occasions for its grim activity. If, for instance, the yellow peril ceases to be a German joke and suddenly turns into a fact, the British, the German, the French, and the Italian will all combine to form one homogeneous

society to deal with that disagreeable fact. At that moment there will be no trace left of the German, the French, the British or the Italian states in any part of Europe. If by any chance that disagreeable fact does not choose to disappear for, say, a century or two, European history will record the present German, British, French and Italian states as it has recorded the Aurignacians, the Magdalenians, the Corinthians and the Greeks.

To quote an analogous instance from the recent history of the English people, we may refer to the imminence of civil war in England over the Irish issue and its disappearance like thin mist as soon as the Great War loomed large on the horizon. The point to note is that the Germans or the British are sometimes Germans and British and sometimes European. When they are European they tend to act together, but do not tend to act as British or German. There is an alternation between these two individualities in the career of all the European people or nations. As British or German, they either fight or live in as different an attitude to each other as if there was no relationship between them. As Europeans, they fight together and live as if they never had any quarrels or disputes with each other. It almost seems as if international relationships are but arrangements which come into being only to avert common danger, and not to realize any common purpose.

It would be interesting to compare the European

with the Indian, or the British and the French with the Punjabi and the Bengali. The Indian, like the European, is not a homogeneous people, and the organization that goes by that name is not a homogeneous body. The Punjabi and the Bengali never lose their individuality. They continue to function as Punjabi and Bengali even while they are functioning as Indian. It means that the Bengali and the Punjabi, assuming that they have not ceased to be Hindu in spirit or practice, never truly become sectarian in the way the British or the Germans or the Italians do. Once an Indian always an Indian.

As is well known, every Hindu all over the continent in his morning prayer offers his tribute to all the gods in the four corners of India, all the great rivers that bring life from the mountains and yield sustenance to the people on the plains, and all the great saints who rose in Hindustan during long centuries to build and rebuild the homes of the human race. To think, feel, and as far as possible, to act in the Indian way is as natural and obligatory to the Punjabi or Bengali or Madrasi as it is to think, act and feel in the Bengali, Punjabi and Madrasi way. It makes no difference whether a Hindu in Bengal or Punjab or Madras is going his round of usual activities or working for a common Indian interest. He is normally expected to feel that he is, if anything, an Indian and not a mere Bengali or Punjabi. His contribution to the Indian problem is offered by him as an Indian just as much as his

contribution to the Bengali problem. He is even expected to feel like a citizen of human society or a member of the world organization.

The individuality of what is now called the provincial life is no more nor less valuable than the individuality of the caste or group to which the Hindu belongs in his native village. As we have already pointed out, the function of each caste lies related to the function of any other, and in exactly the same way the function of each province lies related to the function of any other. As the castes are interdependent, so also are the provinces. Nowhere do we come across a complete and self-sufficient social structure which is an end in itself. There is never reason to stop short at any caste or series of castes or races or regions and say that here it is that the human social structure begins and ends.

We have to look beyond the horizon with which we are familiar and to adjust our actions in anticipation of what may come from the unknown world beyond. If races, customs and faiths flow over into the region where we have built up our political and economic structure, we have to receive them and incorporate them (as one) into our body politic, as if all the races of the world are potentially members of our community. As there is no limit to the expansion of the joint family, so there is no limit to the expansion of the village community or the political and economic association or the social organization. If limits exist as a matter of fact, they are due to

nature and history: they do not carry any logical necessity with them. The point however is not that castes or groups always agree and never differ, whatever the interests may be under construction. The fact is that they do differ just as much as they agree but, as we have already seen, whether they differ or agree they never cease to stand and act as one community. That is the *sine qua non* of the Hindu social order. In so far as differences or disagreements were considered to be accidents or common misfortunes, they implied joint action just as much as the agreements. Herein lies the secret of the whole system.

The test of the un-Hindu way therefore appears in two simple forms of practice or feeling:

1. If a member of the Hindu society comes to feel more like a Bengali than an Indian, if he considers his Bengali life as self-sufficient and complete, he is no longer a Hindu.

2. If a member of the Hindu society happens to take disagreements as an occasion for separation rather than joint effort to remove the causes of it, he is no longer a Hindu.

As we have seen, the exact reverse of this line of thinking and feeling characterizes the European. Differences are to him evidence of the non-existence of unity or common life. Equally, sectional or specialized life appears to him to be more valuable and important than the non-specialized or the undifferentiated. As a very great anthropologist, to whom I

owe a good deal of my respect for the primitive races, once told me, it was only in the European form of social existence that the individual found a chance to get away from his fellow-men. The statement really meant that the European was a born individualist, and naturally fellow-men to him could but serve as an instrument in the last analysis. Perhaps he is a born instrumentalist too. The standing query on the Englishman's life in the twentieth century is—what would he do without his dog or his pipe?

Chapter XIII

There is no need, after all the explanation of the formation of the European social order on the basis of specialization, to point out how it could not be in the nature of things cohesive in the same sense as the Hindu social order was. It is a fact, that except when the occasion has arisen for fighting a common enemy, either by the process of warfare or by the process of ruthless exploitation, the European social order does not normally seem to function. Even then, it is an alliance among the European states more than a relationship which can be valuable on its own account. The fact is that such alliances not only break up as soon as the horizon has been cleared, say, of the dark Asiatic or African clouds, but is almost invariably succeeded by a repetition of the same kind of performance in the shape of interstate or international warfare. We all know what calamitous proportions such performances may easily take. Yet when that is finished or completed, a cruel destiny begins what is called class warfare, reminding one of the old lady going down and down the steps to the regions that lie below.

By an irony of fortune the European, it seems,

never allowed the grass to grow under the feet of disagreements and differences, and his innate conviction of the necessity or the efficacy of fighting as a method of social existence never deserted the European horizon. The picture is dismal and painful, and no Asiatic has reason to rejoice over it, but to expect that stability will be one of the features of the European social order is to delude oneself wilfully. It would be far better to face facts and remember that the European does not always succeed in keeping alive for long anything in the modern age which is strictly European.

We need not carry the tale farther by pointing out that the spirit of exclusiveness and dogmatism arose from the same source of individualism from which the perpetual shuffling of boundaries and constant change of the seat of power and authority took its rise. Naturally Europe has been not only the cockpit of warfare, but the breeding ground of the dictators of history as well as the source of dogma and absolutist ethics. Dogma and dictatorship seem to be in the blood of the European. If Christianity had not intervened to resist the flood of disintegration while the Roman Empire was breaking up, the European order tracing its descent from the Greek might have disappeared altogether. This is not the place to discuss the part played by Christianity in the history of the European. Perhaps even Christianity could not cope with the true European spirit for long. There can be no doubt that it rejuvenated Europe some-

what and gave her chances to reconstruct the European order. The dictators have reappeared, they were heralded by their half-brothers the imperialists, and for the moment the Christian seems to be more or less completely out of the picture. What it means we shall not try to analyze or prejudge.

We may hasten to add that the spirit of Christianity, the advocacy of the spiritual and the divine above everything else, will have to be resought by the European mind before the crisis which brought back the dictator to the European theatre will beat a retreat. Whether it will mean a rejuvenation of the Christian faith, or a reformation of the Gospel which Jesus taught, it is not for us to suggest. There can be no doubt that in some form or other the spiritual force, or the faith which arises straight out of it, will have to be recovered if dictatorship or dogma are to be held in leash again. There are authorities who hold that the present is not the only time when such a crisis arose in the history of the European races. At least twice before, since the Greeks began to give a shape to European history, such a crisis arose. We are told that all the tradition in European thought and practice which, for example, is traceable to the Pythagorean or Platonic thought took its rise when the first recorded crisis came. The other crisis arose when the Roman Empire was breaking up, and it was the Gospel of Jesus which stemmed the tide of disintegration during that period.

It is, therefore, perfectly arguable that in the

moment of its acute distress, when the European law and order was being violated with a total and complete unconcern, the innate individualism of the European mind sought a compromise. It did not consider it beneath its dignity to assimilate the truth of its direct contrary, the spirit of universalism which frankly lays stress on the transcendental, and the unity of the universe, or of the human race. Both Platonic tradition and the Gospel of Jesus are evidences of that assimilation.

If we had time, we should have discussed at length what the assimilation truly meant. The historical thesis bearing on the contact between the two standpoints is most significant from the point of view of the present generation. It shows clearly that if dogma and dictatorship are like germs in the blood-stream of the European, they are by no means virile enough to resist the germ of compromise flowing into the same stream. The periods when common sense, or law and reason as it is technically called, prevailed, stand out just as clearly as those when dictatorship and dogma ruled. The unity of the human race and the European family had to be valued and cherished just as much as the freedom of the individual or the group.

While we are talking about the compromise which the European mind had to make, we may equally refer to similar phases in the history of the Hindu spirit. There have been two recorded occasions in the history of Hinduism when caste was seriously and

steadily challenged. Hinduism had to deal with two sweeping and profound movements inside its own history, Buddhism and Vaishnavism, which directly or indirectly challenged caste. It may even be suggested that Indian history with its panoramic outlay in foreign conquests, which intervened in its continuous record of caste, is but the result of a clash between caste and what is individualism in its Indian form. Some authorities even claim that the Mohammedan opposition to the Hindu belonged to the same category as the Buddhist's opposition to the Brahmin. There is at least a presumption in the poetically tinged speculation of some Indians that three-fourths of the converts to Islam were but Buddhists in disguise. Speculative rumours breed in the humid atmosphere of India exactly as the rigour and purity of ascetic life thrive in its mountain air.

There can be no question, however, that none of the conquests from which India had to suffer at the hands of the outsiders were conceived in the spirit of caste, or executed with its technique. In some sense they are all anti-caste, and it may be suggested that one of the deep-lying causes of the succession of conquests of India was to be found in the sociological fact that the Indians, unlike any other people on the face of this earth, professed and practised the caste system. The conquest of India, unlike the conquest of any other race of people, had the peculiar feature of being followed by recovery inevitably. The recovery cannot be accounted for unless we keep in

mind the fact that the invading people did not profess and practise a culture or faith which belonged to the same species as the Hindu, or was superior to it. In the long run they had to acknowledge a defeat for sheer cultural deficiency, however fortune may have covered them with glory in the initial stage of the clash.

Perhaps it would be more correct to say that, so long as the invading people served as a cathartic to the Indian society, and so long as the stand for freedom of the individual and of the culture that was based on that freedom, not only exposed the characteristic deficiency of the caste order but inevitably led to a reformation, it won uniformly and steadily. Similarly, the breakdown and gradual collapse of the invading people began when they exceeded their limits and sought to replace the whole of the caste order by their own individualistic culture and faith.

Two very remarkable features stand out with deep significance in the history of the human race:—

1. The appearance of Christianity in European history with a message and Gospel which, by its stand for the transcendental and the unity of the universe, brought fresh life and order into European society after individualism had given rise to a sharp crisis. Then the reappearance of the same individualism, after the Gospel of Christ was deliberately moulded into a shape and form almost completely antagonistic to its essential spirit.

2. The appearance of Buddhism and Vaishnavism in India, which meant the rejuvenation of the Hindu social order by their stand for the freedom of the individual. Then the disappearance of them both into forms of caste in course of ages.

There are serious issues for the philosopher and the sociologist to which this alternate rise and fall of the two standpoints in human thought and practice give rise. This is not the place to discuss them. What we would like to point out is that the problem of social order, which is considered to be furthest removed by some people from metaphysical issues, is just as difficult and precariously placed as any religious or philosophical problem. We are convinced that we shall never succeed in solving our social problem, which in the last analysis is a problem of the clash between individualism and caste, before we have solved the problem of the universal and the particular. It might be said that while the agonies of the philosophic spirit due to a failure of the latter might wait, the pain which hunger causes as a result of our failure to solve the social problem cannot wait. We can afford not to lead a life of thought or speculation, but we cannot afford to go without that life which food, shelter and a reproduction of our species produces. The economic interest, to put the position in its technical form, is a paramount issue; all other issues, including the religious and the spiritual, come after it. If we can only manage to live as physical or physiological individuals, we can cherish

the ambition of being philosophers, saints and prophets.

Yet the position is not so simple as it looks. The fact is that we do not succeed in maintaining life on any level if we cannot maintain it on all levels. If we do not succeed in finding a solution of religious and metaphysical problems, we fail equally in solving our economic and political problems.

They seem to be all bound together. As we have tried to show, the whole of our social problem appears in the inevitable clash between individualism and caste which arose out of their extreme, incompatible standpoints. Neither of them has got the whole truth of the human interest, which implies freedom just as much as unity. They uphold either freedom or unity with tenacity and vigour. They achieve fruition up to a point, and then they either lead to a devastation or stagnation, both of which are but phases of the same spectre called crisis. If it were a fact that, while our philosophers and divines had steadily missed the truth and ended in squabbles or controversies, our politicians and economists discovered the secret of social peace and contentment, one might wish they were consigned to a special region. The fact seems to be the other way about.

We can with patience put up with the dark mysteries that are concocted inside the esoteric chambers of the divines and that are then let loose among expectant followers scrambling for piety and

joy. One can again amuse oneself with the logical pride and intellectual assertiveness which our philosophers put into their systems and discourses so that there may be a scramble for the wisdom they are supposed to exude. Is it quite the same thing to go through the horrors of warfare and the long days and nights of gnawing poverty and the utter shame and humiliation which the breakdown of a social system inevitably means?

The fact is that we have failed equally to solve what we call our speculative and practical problems, and the thesis of this book is that they all hang together. You can no more promise your neighbour daily bread than you can wish him the joy of heaven. Why it should be so is another story. It is a fact that no problem is more or less difficult than another, whatever its nature and form. So far as the human race is concerned, it would have to solve the speculative and practical problems equally. It will solve both or solve none. We need not confuse the issue by raising the problem of primitive races. We can only talk about those who at any rate feel that they are not exactly primitive. Whether primitive folk, or, lower down the scale, the animal species, make the distinction between the practical and the speculative we do not know, and so long as we have not been literally translated to them it is not necessary for us to worry.

Chapter XIV

Let us hope we have drawn at least an outline of the picture of individualism with its freedom, dogma and exclusiveness. Our point chiefly has been to show that the social order which is built on the individual as the unit cannot but be sectional or limited in its scope, and in a relation of clash or conflict with its antithesis which must be equally there. Warfare, as a mode of technique for realizing its objective, follows inevitably from the way such a social order has to look upon all those who disagree with it. We cannot therefore describe its militant phase by any means as aberrant or barbaric, or as caprice taking delight in sheer ruthlessness. We can only record the fact that it is still carrying on the custom or rule of life which our savage ancestors invented and cultivated. That does not do away with its claim to be modern and civilized.

On the other hand, it will be perfectly easy to show that the mode or technique of co-operation is equally ancient and prehistoric. As a matter of fact, we have to go back to our ancient ancestors in order to discover the roots or genesis of our cardinal beliefs and practices. The fact is that we were anticipated

long ago, and the pride of the civilized man rests wholly upon the superstructure which he has been steadily building upon the foundation which our prehistoric ancestors laid. There is no reason why we should not feel pride, and even luxuriate in our primitive ancestry.

The point of our long discussion on the difference between individualism and caste, however, has been to show that the question is not whether we are primitive or civilized, ancient or modern, in our mode or method of social existence. The question is whether we propose to remain as we are and repeat history, or whether we are ambitious enough to break some new ground. The former course will mean that we shall go on claiming as usual that society is either a matter of contract or organic growth; that the test of civilization lies either in more and more recognition of the individual as distinct from the common life, or in more and more realization of the life of unity; that anarchy, which implies the non-existence of any life which is common—even public opinion—is the ultimate goal, or that absorption in the absolute is the goal. When, again, these extreme theories and practices will lead on to crisis after crisis, threatening racial death by devastation or stagnation, we shall for a time compromise by borrowing from one another's funds. On the other hand, the latter course will only imply that we should undertake the task of solving the age-old problem of individualism and caste. It will mean

joint and wholehearted endeavour to reach a position which will satisfy both the claims equally without involving a compromise.

It is no part of the object of this book to suggest that the European has practically made up his mind not to repeat history, but to enter into a life of vigorous inquiry and research in all humility. There are many Europeans who still feel honestly that the European civilization in its latest phase is the best that the human race could produce, that it is not only more or less complete but is represented precisely by the form which the British and American mode of political compromise has taken. To them, Indian history, in spite of its survival and stability, is another name for the barbaric or the benighted subcontinent. There are other Europeans who hold the same view about European civilization, but they prefer to call the German and the Italian attempt, which is built on the opposite principle of compromise, the true solution. To these, too, the Indian experiment was not civilized enough. A third view is being held side by side with the other two, and this view has come to emphasize the collective, in the place of singular, interests in the economy of the social order. According to this view, the proletariat is the real human interest; the minority is excluded and not tolerated. By the term collective, this view means nothing more nor less than the vast majority. The upholders of this view also think that the Indian civilization has been a mistake, especially in so far

as it deliberately and frankly built on the transcendental. The point to note, however, is that all these different European views and standpoints, in spite of their diversities, imply individualism at bottom. Their object is to provide for the freedom and uniqueness of the individual. That is why even the biggest social experiment in the European sphere chose anarchy as its ideal and declared the economic interest as paramount. The Russian is just as exclusive and sectional as the others, with whom he is in clash, in spirit and technique.

On the other hand, if we turn to the Indian side, perhaps a similar attitude and conviction will be found. The Indian, too, might be convinced still that it was caste and caste alone that would or could save the world; that the European races never understood what social life or human relationship or the quest of divinity meant; that, if the human social order fell into crisis after crisis, it was wholly because of the idol of the European, the capricious individual, the surd of existence, and the only insoluble or uncertain element in the make-up of humanity.

It so happens that we hold a different view and have some reason to do so. We are confident, with all humility, that a fresh line of activity can be suggested for our race, and that both freedom and unity can be served equally. It means in the last analysis a new conception of divinity, a new metaphysic, and finally an altogether different notion of the universal laws which determine the course of Reality.

Chapter XV

The review of the two social systems we have just finished does not pretend to be exhaustive; on the contrary, it must be very deficient especially with regard to the treatment of the technical issues that had to be raised. We may be permitted to hope that this crude beginning on such an essential enquiry may be followed up by systematic investigation. For ourselves, we are satisfied that our immediate purpose has been served by the light this beginning has thrown on the origin and nature of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem which made this review necessary. We feel convinced that really and truly there is nothing in this problem which need worry us as of grave portent. It would be stupid to forget that the problem is there, but it will be senseless to assume that it is only another name for the Indian problem.

We can concede to it an importance perhaps a little higher than what we have to concede, say, to any inter-caste problem like, for instance, the problem of the depressed class, that of the landlord and tenant, that of the Englishman in his club and the Indian in his home, that of the Indian Christian on the one hand and the Mohammedan or the Hindu

on the other, or any other problem which India has developed during the last few decades. As a problem in itself it has no inherent significance and, on the contrary, it is tied up with the main problem of modern India—the problem of the village community—with Indian civilization, the social or economic existence of the Indian people, Hindu, Mohammedan or Christian. One may even suggest something like evidence for such a view, and that evidence will be found in the simple fact that the Indians could not possibly have had any energy left to cultivate any other serious problem after they had been drawn, almost by fate, into the titanic conflict between European individualism on the one hand and their own centuries-old social and economic beliefs and practices on the other. The most obvious fact of modern Indian history is that every ounce of strength and energy that the Indian ever possessed has been drawn upon ever since this conflict began, and if there is any doubt about it or difficulty in accepting this naked truth, one need only look to the disaster that has steadily descended like dark night on the Indian home. No historian would hesitate to compare it with the Armageddon which the epics of the Hindus have immortalized. The picture that rises straight out of this modern drama surpasses not merely the Panipats of the medieval age but even the Kurukhetra, if not quite Lord Rama Chandra's achievement for civilization and order in the Treta Juga of the Hindu chronology.

If further evidence is necessary we may suggest that such conflicts as arose between the Hindu and the Mohammedan, or the touchable and untouchable, were bound to arise because they had all lost the background of their common home. These conflicts are really symptoms of the disease and break-up of the Indian social order, and not the disease itself, as the pathologist calls our various ailments. They really and truly do not make extra work for us, to put it in the homely expression of the English; they rather remind us that something is rotten in the state of Denmark. We find in them more than in anything else that we, as a people or a culture or a social order, have ceased to function as we used to do before. We are not living for the moment as Indian people so much as Hindus or Mohammedans, or as Brahmins or Vaisyas or Sudras, or as landlords and tenants, or as touchables or untouchables. It seems as if, in the place of the village community, the one compact organization of castes or groups, the castes or groups with their uniqueness and distinctness have separately appeared bearing no relationship to one another and having no common end or purpose except that of dealing with a foreign rule and a strange civilization. As this common purpose can take only one of two forms—that of exploiting the British rule, or that of resisting it with a view to recovering our cultural and sociological unity—we are reduced to the state either of wasting our time in quarrelling over the economic and political profit

that we can make out of the foreign rule, or of organizing more and more efficient resistance to it. Nothing worse than this has happened; nothing less than this could happen.

All people behave under similar circumstances exactly as we have been behaving, and it will be perfectly correct to look for analogous conditions among the European races even at this very moment. Surely the European family, or civilization which forms the backbone of the different European states and nations, is no longer functioning as it did even two or three decades ago. The exploitation and the ruthless colonization by the European of Asia and Africa is still going on but, except in solitary instances, it is no longer being carried out with the same united vigour and purpose as in the last century and in the first period of the present century. What strength it still seems to possess springs from accumulated energy, and is the result of a confidence which comes from established order. No one need doubt that it is still capable of achieving a good deal, for good or evil, if it cares. As a symbol of modern Europe the huge crane with its monster-like teeth is still very effective, but in the background of the picture one finds warehouses being steadily glutted or emptying.

All the fresh signs of life are disintegrating the stupendous energy which built up these warehouses with care and united effort. The European races are steadily and even vigorously disbanding, questioning

seriously if the profit that was made out of combined imperial efforts was equitably distributed among the various partners in the game. It is the sense of uniqueness and distinctness that is superseding the sense of unity and harmony with a curious sense of justice shaping this process. More and more efforts are being made in consequence to prove that it was not the European family so much as the German or the Italian or the French or the British race or nationality that is the key point of European culture. It is being seriously held that there was much more in the state or the nation than in the League of States or Nations.

If we look at the picture from the standpoint of ideology, the classes are dividing themselves exactly as the Hindus and the Mohammedans are separating. The class with authority and money seems to be breaking away from the class with the capacity to work and produce, so that, in the place of one European family or people, we are getting steadily more and more classes like the plutocrat and the proletariat, the socialist and the fascist for instance.

Our point here is not to paint this picture of disintegration in lurid colours. That would be stupid. Europe's misfortune or danger can only be evidence that Europe could not or did not escape the nemesis to which the deliberate disbanding of the Asiatic order by her political or industrial blunder gave rise. It is significant that, while we in India are furiously

trying to break up our common home under the illusion that as Hindus and Mohammedans we should serve our earthly interest better, the European is doing exactly the same thing under exactly the same conviction about the magic of separate existence. If we bear in mind the fact that Europe cannot escape this disintegration in spite of her philosophy, science, and unlimited capacity or opportunity to organize, it is not necessarily the absence or want of these modes and manners of regulating life that really determined our own misfortune. The explanation for this universal calamity, the disintegration of human civilization on both the European and Asiatic fronts, is to be found elsewhere in the clash between the two systems of human society, and nowhere else. It is these systems more than anything else which constitute the real centre of strength or energy in the career of the human race, and not any particular group of people or a particular system of philosophy or a theory or practice of science or an economic or political organization. These are abstractions as the logician says, features which are true of the systems and relevant to them, but not real in themselves, nor by any means the chief determining agents.

The real issue between the European and the Indian is not whether the latter possesses the same or more wealth and opportunity, equally strong organization for offence and defence, and so on, but whether he belongs to, or possesses, any social

system which can stand shoulder to shoulder with that of the European. As it is obvious and evident that he does possess such a social system, disintegration in Indian life as well as in that of European life must be judged in terms of their social systems alone, and not on the philosophy, science and organization that they mutually profess and practice. In other words, both systems may be supposed to possess equally all these aids for the realization of the social existences to a degree sufficient for their respective needs.

The issue at the moment therefore seems to be nothing less than the issue of civilization. The question that we have to consider in right earnest is whether it is possible any longer to preserve the human race. The interest that counts at the moment is the interest of the civilized and the uncivilized man and nothing else. The more we keep the central truth in mind—that both systems of civilization have broken down, that what is at stake to-day is human interest and safety and not the European or Asiatic interest and safety—the easier it will be for us to deal with the European problem on the one hand and the Asiatic or the Indian problem on the other. If, on the contrary, the Hindu and the Mohammedan choose to think that they can achieve their political or economic welfare better by separate existence, and if the Englishman in his turn goes on deluding himself that he can achieve his imperial interests better by keeping them apart, it will only be a signal

for fresh disorder or more acute disintegration both in the English and the Indian life. It is high time that the Englishman realizes that he stands to-day in the same precarious state as the Hindu or the Mohammedan, in spite of the fact that he possesses his own sense of legal right to rule India and an army powerful enough to defend it, if necessary.

The fact is that both the right and the army stand, as a matter of course, partly on the consent, implicit or explicit, of the Hindu and the Mohammedan and partly on the Englishman's integrity as a European. If it be a fact that his prestige or credit as a ruler, as well as his integrity as the most powerful member of the European family, have been seriously questioned, would it not be strange if he felt that he could carry on as if nothing had happened. On the other hand, the Hindu and the Mohammedan have no chance of surviving for any length of time if their integrity or individuality as Indians is not or cannot be restored.

The ideal of Pan-Islamism as a political hegemony of the Mohammedan race and peoples has at least one great deficiency, and that is that all the Mohammedan states at the moment with a solitary exception happen to be either already nationalistic in their outlook or on the verge of being nationalistic. Pan movements, as is obvious, cannot spread beyond where nationalism rules: what can be achieved in their place is alliance, and alliances among nationalistic states may or may not keep

within racial and cultural bounds. Thus Pan-Islamism, which is the only goal of separatism among the Indian Mohammedans, does not seem to be any longer a practical proposal. What the Indian Mohammedan has to bear in mind is that, outside the Indian system, there is only one political or economic society, and that is the European society.

On the other hand, the idea of Hindu domination, with the scheme of Hindu nationality, can only spell disaster for Hinduism. There will be nothing of it left if the modern Hindu, intoxicated by political ambition, chooses to be a domineering nationalist. Neither the Mohammedan nor the Hindu can possibly afford to cherish or cultivate his historic memories in terms of political domination or economic exploitation of the other if he proposes to guarantee his future prospects. The only rational course which is left for him to follow is to go back to the polity in which both Mohammedan and Hindu lived together for centuries, and then address himself to the task of reconstruction or regeneration.

There should be no departure from that course, once undertaken, either for sectional interest or personal gain. All propaganda which builds on alliances directly against the spirit and technique of this polity can only be poison to both. A Hindu may be made a Maharajah and a Mohammedan may get a Nawazship. Groups of Hindus and Mohammedans may be financed liberally for carrying out an imperial scheme—the illusion of the Europeans—and

the rank and file of both the Hindus and the Mohammedans may be stimulated or excited to create what is called bad blood between the two communities. Even the old technique of fanaticism may be revived by playing adroitly upon deep racial elements among the Mohammedan masses while the rank and file of the Hindus may be filled with bitter hatred and rank animosity against the Mohammedan.

None of these methods, however planned or executed and on whatever scale, can serve for long either the Hindu or the Mohammedan any better than ill-gotten wealth and privilege is reputed to have served those whose fortune it was.

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